Imperial College Union
Board of Trustees

Leadership Election 2021 Report

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Purpose: To provide a summary of the election and results, including detail on voter turnout, complaints, incidents and an overview of recommendations.

1. Summary of Election and Results

Due to COVID-19 lockdown and government advice the Union delivered a fully online Leadership Election, this was run concurrently with online CSP committee elections.

1.1 Summary of Results

Between 10 March 2021 and 18 March 2021 elections for the following positions were held:

- All 5 Full Time Officer Positions
- Council Chair
- Two Elected Student Trustees
- Constituent Union Executive Committee Positions
- Liberation and Community Officer Positions
- Academic and Wellbeing Representatives
- CSP Committee Positions

The full results for each position can be found online at https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/news/leadership-elections-2021-results. The final results for the above positions were:

Position	Winner
President	Lloyd James
Deputy President Education	Lucia Rodriguez De Guzman Martinez
Deputy President Welfare	Nathalie Podder
Deputy President Clubs & Societies	India Marsden
Deputy President Finance & Services	Sam Lee
Student Trustee	Gabrielle Mathews & Hilliam Tung
Council Chair	Michaela Flegrova

2. Election Support

The Deputy Returning Officer was responsible for deciding on any matter relating to the conduct of the election. This includes the power to penalise or exclude candidates in respect of any breach of election regulations. The Returning Officer for these elections was Tom Newman.

The Returning Officer was responsible for advising the Deputy Returning Officers on serious breaches of the election rules. The Returning Officer for this election was Ryan Bird (Chief Executive Officer, Reading Students' Union).

The Elections Working Group consisted of Union staff, the current Deputy President Welfare and Deputy President Clubs and Societies. The group was responsible for planning and delivering all operational aspects of the election, in line with the decisions of the Returning Officers.

The Elections Working Group for these elections included:

Shervin Sabeghi	Victoria Agbontaen
Ross Unwin	Glen Whitcroft
Rachel Sunderland	Kristin Mewald
Phil Stewart	Irina Bobecia

3. Election Schedule
This year's election period schedule was as follows:

Nominations Open	Noon Monday 8 February 2021
Nominations Close	Noon Friday 5 March 2021
Manifestos Due	14:00 Tuesday 9 March 2021
Candidate Briefing	Noon Wednesday 10 March 2021
Candidates Revealed / Start of campaigning	14:00 Wednesday 10 March 2021
Voting Open	09:00 Monday 15 March 2021
Voting Close	14:00 Thursday 18 March 2021
Complaints deadline	17:00 Thursday 18 March 2021
Authorisation to run results	10:00 Friday 19 March 2021
Results announced	Friday 19 March 2021

4. Voter Turnout
'Voter turnout' refers to the total number of eligible students who voted in the Leadership Elections. This does not include students who voted in the CSP elections.

	Total		
Year	Voters	Electorate	% Turnout
2012	6538	*15906*	41.10%
2013	6496	16000	40.60%
2014	6537	16631	39.31%
2015	7258	17089	42.47%
2016	7966	17519	45.47%
2017	6704	18222	36.79%
2018	6810	19103	35.65%
2019	8121	19697	41.23%
2020	6104	20641	29.57%
2021	6212	22822	27.22%

5. Candidates

Position	2021 Candidates	2020 Candidates	2019 Candidates	2018 Candidates	2017 Candidates
President	3	5	9	10	5
Deputy President Education	2	2	1	1	2
Deputy President Welfare	2	3	5	2	5
Deputy President Clubs & Societies	4	2	5	1	3
Deputy President Finance & Services	2	2	4	3	3
Total	13	14	24	17	18

6. Election Rules and Incidents

The Election Rules were approved in advance by the Board and in line with the Union constitution and Bye Law H for Major Elections. Students were required to agree to these rules upon submitting a nomination and were required to attend a rules briefing prior to campaigning.

Previous elections had anecdotally shown a trend towards higher complaints and appeals which required significant staff, officer and student resource. However, this trend has not continued in the Leadership Elections 2021. It should be noted that there is still a significant volume of enquiry to the Elections inbox relating to rules.

6.1 Complaints

The Deputy Returning Officer received 12 complaints during the elections. 5 of these were upheld and warnings issued to 5 separate individuals. 1 warning was rescinded following evidence provided by the candidate that they obtained permission to post in a social media group. 2 warnings related to use of social media groups where prior permission was not granted to post. 1 warning related to an unsolicited direct message on social media which was considered spamming. 1 warning related to a candidate in a lecture shoutout negatively criticising another candidate's campaign. All other complaints which were not upheld were minor, such as failure to include the Union logo on a social media post or multiple complaints for the same offence. None of the complaints were deemed serious enough to result in escalation to the RO.

6.2 Systems Incidents

Our systems team discovered that on 8 occasions in the main election and 7 occasions in the online CSP election the system mistakenly counted votes twice. The system's team and DRO were able to identify all double counts and discard these votes with the RO and Governance Committee's permission.

There was a very rare system fault which caused the online vote system to crash for people when they were placing their vote, this was a very rare occurrence at 0.53%, and all of those students this happened to were able to place their vote.

7. CSP Elections
The Union ran CSP elections concurrently with the main elections. This year 3092 positions were available in the election. This election saw 4,754 voters, which is a 27.73% turnout. Positions that were not filled at this time will be run in the Summer Election 2021.

8. Improvements for 2021-22
The Union should as part of its wider strategic work seek to enhance the experience of volunteers and support deeper engagement with the Union, this will in turn increase the appeal of elected roles.

The Union should relax its rule on including the Union brand and only apply stricter adherence to Union branding to candidate print material. There is a grey area on endorsements by current postholders and CSPs which the Union should review and clarify.

The online results event was successful and should be incorporated into planning for future elections regardless of whether in person activity is permitted.

9. Conclusion
In line with the requirement in the Education Act (1994), both the Union-wide and group elections were administered in a free and fair manner.