

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

The first meeting of Governance and Identity Board (GIB)

The meeting GIB was held remotely on Tuesday 20th October 2020 6pm – 7.30pm

Present

Role	Name
Union President	Abhijay Sood (AS - Chair)
RSMU President	Jasmine Crocker (JC)
RSMU Secretary	Teigan Collins (TC)
ICSMSU President	Muntaha Naeem (MN)
ICSMSU Deputy President	Nicole George (NG)
Council Representative (UG Engineering)	Varun Srivastava (VS)
GSU President	Zixiao Wang (ZW)
RCSU President	Aparna Pillai (AP)
RCSU Treasurer	Matthew Leontsinis (ML)
CGCU President	Hayley Wong (HW)
CGCU Vice President	Hilliam Tung (HT)

Observers:

Governance Officer	Victoria Agbontaen (VA)
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Apologies:

Union Council Chair	Alex Auyang (AA)
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Item	Actions
1. Introductions 1.1. Chair welcomed members to the second GIB meeting of the term.	
2. Apologies Alex Auyang (AA)	
3. Minutes 3.1. Minutes of the last meeting were approved.	
4. Action Tracker 4.1. Updated.	
5. CU Updates 5.1. CGCU – HW highlighted that the CGCU have a renewed focus on reconnecting the Alumni with the current students. As the CGCU have a huge Alumni association they have been holding events to connect the Alumni of each department to the department themselves. 5.2. HW also added they are starting a mentoring scheme for current students and Alumni which is available for all CGCU students to apply for. 5.3. HW noted that the Intercollegiate Engineering Alliance (IEL) is coming up which is a network in which all the engineering societies of Imperial College, Cambridge, Oxford, Harvard and MIT. they will be meeting next week to discuss how engineering students can connect all across the world and if a convention will be possible later in the year. 5.4. ICSMSU - MN gave a brief update noting that the ICSMSU currently is dealing with Covid-19 and concerns from International students and them returning to the UK due to the government lockdown. 5.5. MN also highlighted there has been a movement of some of the laboratories (SAF) which will be turned into a research institute which he or other student reps were not informed of. MN said all informed pertaining to this will be announced to students either before the end of term or in January. 5.6. MN added that there is the Medical school and then there is the Faculty itself. The Faculty of Medicine also covers post-graduate teaching. 5.7. MN said it would be useful to have other CU President's thoughts on the issue as this decision was not made by the School of Medicine. 5.8. MN said this may impact CSPs as some of this space is used for activities. 5.9. JC agreed that it is unfair to not involve student reps in these discussions and questioned if MN knew why he had not been included in these discussions as those people should be held accountable. 5.10. MN informed GIB that he was informed by the time he was involved, this was already a done deal as the faculty needed a specific type of laboratory, which specific space and ventilation. Therefore, no matter the result of a student consultation, the decision would not have been changed. 5.11. AS added that this could have been handled better and suggested that MN include academics as well as students as part of this post-consultation period as it will inadvertently impact them too. 5.12. RSMU – JC noted that there will be the first consultation on Bottle match happening this week and RU from the Officer Team will be joining. 5.13. JC said that the general consensus was that the RSM would like to postpone the event, as opposed to continuing without a crowd in February.	HW to update GIB on meeting with the IEL.

<p>5.14. JC highlighted that voting had closed to pass a new constitution today. 17 votes and 1 against with no complications and she hopes this will be passed at Council in January.</p> <p>5.15. JC noted they had included a PG ordinary member on the executive team as there are no PG's on committee, outlining this would exclude PG's for running for the President and VP (Education) and VP (Welfare) roles.</p> <p>5.16. JC highlighted that there is a sense of 'online event fatigue' amongst the students and it is difficult to get students to engage and participate in online events.</p> <p>5.17. HW said it is important for the CU's to move away from just being a society and try to be more of a Union and focus on what the students are missing and offer them more opportunities, which might help with levels of engagement.</p> <p>5.18. JC noted that the RSM does not have specific accounts dedicated to welfare or events but rather just accounts for dinners etc. which does not fall under this remit. JW said she needs to discuss with the DPFS how the funds will be reallocated to their accounts.</p> <p>5.19. RCSU – The Faculty have been asking how students who are staying in London for the Winter holidays can be supported so they do not feel isolated, AP said this may include a Christmas competition etc.</p> <p>5.20. Representation is business as usual and they are doing a diversity and inclusivity project to learn how to make students feel more included as part of the RCSU community.</p> <p>5.21. AP said the RSCU a careers event to help students with applications.</p> <p>5.22. GSU – <i>ZW was absent for this part of the meeting.</i></p>	
<p>6. Union Council</p> <p>6.1. Chair noted that he has been looking into how a piece of work can be done about how Council can be made more effective and how support for the CU's can be improved.</p> <p>6.2. A question was asked by HW what the result of the consultation with previous CU Presidents were. GIB were informed that the main feedback was around comms and there were proposals made around how to improve CU support, i.e., having a coordinator specifically for CU activity.</p> <p>6.3. AS noted that last year he was not able to meet with the CU President as frequently as he would have preferred but would like to have 1-2-1's with everyone before the end of term.</p> <p>6.4. AS highlighted that as subcommittees of Council have improved and developed, the actual Council meetings are somewhat negatively affected as a result of this as most of the important discussions are not happening at Council.</p> <p>6.5. AS added that there is a perception that things discussed at Council are not relevant to all people and it is not holding people to account or performing its main function.</p> <p>6.6. MN said that this is his first year on Council, but his thoughts were that there are a lot of people who have ideas, thoughts and potential papers they would like to bring to Council but chose not to. MN stated that he was unsure if this was due to poor signposting of Council, with students not understanding what Council is or its purpose or whether it was students simply not knowing that they are able to attend any Council meeting as a member of the Union.</p> <p>6.7. MN also added that there is a sense that Council is a large, high-level meeting which may deter students from attending or contributing which causes potential barriers. However, being a part of Council, he realises</p>	<p>AS to have 1-2-1s with each CU President before the end of Term 1.</p>

that this is not the case and it is a forum for students to come and discuss any and all issues pertaining to them.

- 6.8.** MN suggested that it may be valuable for CU Presidents to reach out to their members to try to support students who want to attend Council.
- 6.9.** MN said that Council is a place where the student voice can be prompted into real action and not all students realise and recognise the power they have which is empowered through Council.
- 6.10.** AS asked what MN's awareness of Council was before he joined as the ICSMSU President. MN said he became aware of Council very early on but was not aware that ordinary student members could attend the meetings or propose papers.
- 6.11.** MN added that CU Presidents should take the pastoral responsibility to guide members through the process and engage members.
- 6.12.** HW agreed with MN's comments explaining that many students may feel too intimidated to participate in Council because they feel they are not equipped to do so.
- 6.13.** HW said when she was in her first year she was not aware of what Council was but even if she was, she still would not have attended as it felt too far removed from 'usual' students and there should not be pressure on students to bring papers.
- 6.14.** HW stated it may be valuable to promote Council to wider students, but it may be more effective to empower and focus our efforts of students who are already involved with the Union, i.e., other Committee members and other reps.
- 6.15.** JC stated that she feels separated from the other members of Council such as the MG Chairs, Officer Trustees etc. and apart from the initial Council meeting where members were able to mix and interact via Teams breakout rooms, there have not been many opportunities for members of Council to engage with each other.
- 6.16.** JC questioned whether it was necessary for CU Presidents to have to write reports for Council as they spend a huge amount of time on them and not many members take the time to review the report or offer feedback on it. JC said it is a time-consuming piece of work which purely feels like a formality and is not suitably considered by Council.
- 6.17.** JC questioned whether it would be appropriate for MG Chairs to also write reports. JC expressed that some CU Presidents felt uncomfortable with Council voting on their reports.
- 6.18.** AS explained that up until last year, CU reports had always been voted on at Council and the main purpose of the reports to the help Council understand what exactly the CU Presidents do.
- 6.19.** JC said there should be an expectation for handovers to specify what Council reports are for and how they should be written.
- 6.20.** VS stated that a lot of his course mates and friends are not comfortable writing papers on topics they would like addressed because they assume a lot of that these things are already being discussed. It needs to be made clear to students that they can write a paper about any subject.
- 6.21.** HT highlighted it is important to ensure that Council is effective and useful for any student to get involved with and it should be a platform whereby students can critique what is happening in the Union. HT agreed that the subcommittees seem to be more useful as you can directly see the changes and decisions made.
- 6.22.** HT said the success/failures of items from previous meetings should be discussed and followed up on at following meetings.
- 6.23.** AP added that Council can feel intimidating and does not feel she can bring justice to the report due to the other amount of other ongoing work that the CU's are doing.
- 6.24.** ZW questioned whether it had been considered to only have the departmental reps on Council. AS said this suggestion would work

for UG's, however for PG's there are not departmental reps in every department which could cause complications. ZW highlighted that departmental reps know the students better than Union Council reps so they should have a place on Council.

CU Support

- 6.25. AS asked the CU's what their understanding is of the purpose of their CU and what can be done to make students feel more connected.
- 6.26. HW agreed that the roles of ICSMSU and RSMU Presidents and their respective CU's are much more defined than that of the CGCU and RCSU. HW expressed that it can come across that the CGCU is competing with its own DepSocs.
- 6.27. HW stated that the CGCU President role feels a lot more admin heavy than representation heavy.
- 6.28. AP agreed and explained that a lot of communication skips her and goes to the specific VP of that issue.
- 6.29. JC stated that although most committee members keep her involved and updated on matters, there are some others who do not allow her to input on issues she may have a better outlook on.
- 6.30. MN said that although he is a Sabbatical Officer, he feels as if his role is admin heavy and still does feel there are more things he could be engaged with.
- 6.31. ML added that within the subcommittee he manages, communication has been difficult and asked AS for advice on how to manage these types of issues.
- 6.32. ML said he felt he was thrown into the role with a minimal induction programme and was not fully equipped through adequate training and induction to take this on.
- 6.33. AS suggested that going into the new academic term, it might be useful to have a regular structure of meetings put in calendars at the beginning of term, that way it is already in people's diaries and can be cancelled if the meeting is no longer required.
- 6.34. HW stressed that it would be helpful to have a staff member who is purely dedicated to supporting the CU.

Any Other Business

None