

Imperial College Union
Minutes of the fourth ordinary Meetings of Union Council
19th January 2021 - 12:00pm – 2:00pm

Present

Role	Name
Union Council Chair	Alex Auyang (AA/Chair)
Union President	Abhijay Sood (AS)
Deputy President (Welfare)	Shervin Sabeghi (SS)
Deputy President (Education)	Michaela Flegrova (MF)
Deputy President (Clubs & Societies)	Ross Unwin (RU)
Deputy President (Finance and Services)	Sam Lee (SL)
Arts and Entertainment Sector Chair	India Marsden (IM)
CGCU President	Hayley Wong (HW)
CGCU Vice President (Wellbeing)	Matthew Scott (MS)
Community and Faith Sector Chair	Joshua Ofengbai (JO)
Culture Sector Chair	Tin Hang Un (TU)
Ethics and Environment Officer	Stephanie Yeung (SY)
Gender Equality Officer	Priantha Pretheshan (PP)
GSU President	Zixiao Wang (ZW)
GSU Vice President (Representation)	Lintong Li (LL)
GSU PGR Academic & Welfare Officer (Engineering)	Abderrahim Boualam (AB)
ICSMSU President	Muntaha Naeem (MN)
Interfaith Officer	Safi Thanya Siamwalla (SS)
International Officer	Isabelle Zhang (IZ)
Knowledge Sector Chair	Alexander Nielsen (AN)
LGBT+ Officer	Keir Logan (KL)
PG FoE Council Rep	Ravi Shankar (RS)
RCSU President	Aparna Pillai (AP)
RSMSU President	Jasmine Crocker (JC)
Sports Sector Chair	Geoffrey Sheir (GS)
UG FoM Council Rep	Haider Nazerali (HZ)
UG FoM Council Rep	Gabrielle Mathews (GB)
UG FoNS Council Rep	Michael Kohn (MK)
UG FoNS Council Rep	Susan Rutter (SR)
UG FoE Council Rep	Varun Srivastava (VS)
UG FoE Council Rep	Hilliam Tung (HT)
UG FoE Council Rep	Olasoji Ajayi (OA)
UG FoE Council Rep	James White (JW)
PG FoE Council Rep	Zhongyao Jiang (ZJ)
PG FoNS Council Rep	Ansh Bhatnagar (AB)
PG FoNS Council Rep	Chiara Riedel-Loria (CRL)
PG Non-Faculty Council Rep	Luckme Thakkar (LT)

Observers:

Felix Editor	Calum Drysdale (CD)
Student Trustee	Lloyd James (LJ)

Student Trustee	Christopher Carter (CC)
Student	Léonie Strömich (LS)
Student	Hana Khatib (HK)
Student	Ceire J Wincott (CW)
Student	George Spencer (GS)
Student	Shivam Patel (SP)
Governance Officer	Victoria Agbontaen (VA)

Apologies:

BME Officer	Deborah Adegoke (DA)
PG Non-Faculty Council Rep	Sabrina Lui (SL)

Absent:

CGCU Vice President (Education)	Aleksander Ziolkowski (AZ)
Disabilities Officer	Adya Rao (AR)
Media Chair	Matej Genci (MG)
Mental Health Officer	Lauren Wheeler (LW)
ICSMSU Welfare Officer	Natania Varshney (NV)
ICSMSU Academic Chair	Rachel Kwok (RK)
PG FoM Council Rep	Subarna Chakraborty (SC)
PG FoM Council Rep	Ebenezer Donkor (ED)
RCSU Vice President (Education)	Daniyar Ghani (DG)
RSMSU Vice President (Education)	Katie McCann (KM)
RSMSU Welfare Officer	Emmeline Poole (EP)
RCSU Vice President (Welfare)	Maria Borc (MB)
Recreation Sector Chair	Adam Turner (AT)
Silwood Park President	Conor Nicoll (CN)
Working Class Officer	Grace Fisher (GF)

Item	Actions
<p>1. Chair's welcome and Chair's business 1.1. Chair welcomed the Council to the fourth 2020-21 Council Meeting.</p>	
<p>2. Apologies: 2.1. Apologies from: Deborah Adegoke (DA) Sabrina Lui (SL)</p>	
<p>3. Minutes of Previous Meeting 3.1. Chair confirmed with Council if there were any changes required to be made to the minutes. 3.2. No dissensions were put forward. 3.3. Chair confirmed the minutes as accepted as consensus.</p>	
<p>4. Action Tracker 4.1. AAu and SL to meet and discuss SSB policies.</p>	
Matters for Decision	
<p>5. Modernise and Improve the SOLE Survey 5.1. JW gave a brief overview of the paper highlighting that it is about several issues that had been brought forward to the academic rep meeting whereby only College were able to change the survey. 5.2. JW noted there were issues around accessibility, the way in which SOLE works etc. 5.3. MF said the proposed Union resolves are good, but they are were not something the Union can do. Instead, the resolves should be to mandate the DPE to do these things. MF expressed that she understood the frustrations with the SOLE Survey as this is something MF had promised to focus on in her manifesto and has been looking at for the past 3-4years as an academic Rep. 5.4. MF said that she is working with the College to make changes to the survey and is in active discussion with them, so it is helpful to see some suggestions in the paper and welcomed any further feedback and comments on the SOLE Survey. 5.5. Chair put the paper to members of Council to vote. The results are as follows: 25 approve and 2 abstain. 5.6. Paper was therefore passed by Council.</p>	
<p>6. Bullying and Harassment by Senior Management 6.1. LJ stated that the College has a zero-tolerance policy on paper concerning bullying and harassment. It is known that following an investigation, the President and CFO of the College were found to have participated in bullying and harassment but rather than take any decisive action, the University have given them a slap on the wrist and tried to move on. 6.2. LJ added that the paper suggests that it is his belief that the consequences of their actions is not consistent with a zero-tolerance policy for them to retain their positions. Additionally, the College's continued lack of action on this continues to send a negative signal throughout the institution about how it deals with and tolerates this type of behaviour. 6.3. LJ explained that the resolution of the paper is that the Union should follow the lead of the UCU in calling for the resignation of the College President – Alice Gast and the Chief Financial Officer – Muir Sanderson, specifically outlining some actions that the Union can take to add pressure to this.</p>	<p>Provide update to Council and decide whether a referendum should be held by the next Council meeting.</p>

- 6.4.** AB who seconded the paper, added that it would send a strong message if staff and students are united on this front. AB felt that the College would be more inclined to do something if both the staff and student body were aligned in their responses and actions.
- 6.5.** AS highlighted that what was upheld against Alice and Muir was gross misconduct which subsequently means they can be asked to leave and can be considered a sackable offence, especially as it has been admitted by the Leadership of the College themselves.
- 6.6.** AS stated that this process has not been handled properly internally neither has it been discussed by the governing body of the university and he is ensuring there is a discuss had.
- 6.7.** AS noted that some people may be concerned about this adversely affecting the Union's relationship with the university but clarified that the university is not a monolith and many staff at the university are shocked that Alice and Muir did not leave on their on volition when they had an opportunity.
- 6.8.** AS said that if this paper passed it would be helpful in sparking a discussion of this matter internally to the College.
- 6.9.** ZW said it was his understanding that the purpose of this paper was not to remove Alice and Muir from their positions but to exert pressure on them to feel inclined to do so. ZW felt it necessary to pursue a referendum rather than a petition as the University has not yet released the full investigation report so there are many unknown details about what is happening.
- 6.10.** ZW expressed that he felt the best plan of action to take would be to wait for full details to be released, give all students one week to voice their concerns and then subsequently hold a referendum.
- 6.11.** IZ questioned AS what specific staff members were surprised by the outcome of the investigation, as the impression she has gotten from staff is that there are a lot of senior College members who are in defence of Alice and Muir. AS said there are a variety of views along with a spectrum of seniority in the College and he would not want to violate the confidentiality between himself and these staff members. However, AS said that is a general consensus of shock on this issue.
- 6.12.** MK highlighting that staff/students may potentially not ever see the full report as it would break the confidentiality of people who came forward, so having a referendum would not be feasible.
- 6.13.** MK also added there had been discussions of amendments to the bullying and harassment policy during the investigation so it would be imperative to consider this when addressing the issue and sending out a petition to all students. AS agreed this has been mismanaged and informed Council there will be an internal investigation into how the policy was changed.
- 6.14.** OA said he supports ZW proposal to have a broad range of opinions considered from students in the College and his biggest concern is not having a redacted copy of the investigation as if Union were to vote purely on the statement that the College have made this would be a blind vote.
- 6.15.** OA added it would not be wise to lobby for the Heads of the organisation to step down without having any information to make that decision and will start a precedence.
- 6.16.** JW added that if Alice and Muir were to step down from their positions, their predecessor could have been complicit in this bullying, but we would not be aware as we do not have all the information. LJ responded saying what type of signal is being sent by not taking any

action and if they are replaced with people of similar characters, the institution would've sent the signal specifying they do not tolerate bullying and harassment, which is the most important thing.

- 6.17.** LJ agreed with IZ in saying that it is wrong in saying that we do not have enough information and it is unlikely that we will ever see the full report. LJ expressed that Council has the responsibility to act on behalf of the students, weigh up the evidence and make an informed decision.
- 6.18.** AB added that it is important to remember that the victims are under NDA's and the College have tried to keep this quiet. AB pointed out that College comms from Alice pointed out that they had been found guilty in the investigation, but it is the details of that investigation that are unknown.
- 6.19.** OA questioned that although the investigation was done by an independent body, is there a possibility that a different conclusion could be made by another investigation. AS responded saying the QC independent body interviewed 50+ College staff and the process was thorough and rigorous.
- 6.20.** AN highlighted that the way that this has been handled portrays a shocking lack of respect for the Union and the student body in terms of repeatedly withholding information, until public figures who are external to the College pressure them to release more information and leadership at College also need to be held accountable for this.
- 6.21.** AP agreed with AN's points and with the core points of the paper. AP added that the core of this issue is how we treat each other and how the College is saying it is okay to treat others and if the Union/students do not express the opinions, we are saying it is okay not only for the President to treat people badly, but it is also fine for students, lectures etc. to do the same and face little to no repercussions.
- 6.22.** HW questioned whether instead of voting for a petition, it can be a vote to decide on whether the Union should pursue a referendum as this would solidify the call for resignation.
- 6.23.** AS clarified that the investigation took place during the Summer. Stating that Muir will claim that the allegations against him are localised to a very specific time where he was under immense pressure which AS expressed to be quite disingenuous as Muir can be quite abusive to people in a group setting.
- 6.24.** AS pointed out there is a lot of information available including various news articles and an admission from the College where Senior Leaders have admitted to gross misconduct and the recommendations from the report.
- 6.25.** AS added in addition to the lack of respect for the Union, there has also been a lack of respect for the College Council as until the records were published, the College Council had not seen the recommendations, nor have they seen a redacted report.
- 6.26.** AS confirmed that voting in no confidence in this context equates to demanding for their resignation and the wording can be amended if it would make members more comfortable voting for the paper.
- 6.27.** AS indicated that voting to proceed with a referendum would have caused a negative impact on the relationship the Union has with College and recommended against a referendum, advising that if there has not been any movement on this by February then a referendum should be considered.

<p>6.28. The voting opened for the paper as is, minus 2C.</p> <p>6.29. Chair put the paper to members of Council. The results are as follows: 28 approve and 1 reject.</p> <p>6.30. The voting opened for the paper but with a decision to propose a referendum or petition.</p> <p>6.31. The results are as follows: 7 referendum, 7 abstain and 15 petition.</p> <p>6.32. Paper was therefore passed by Council.</p>	
<p>Matters for Report/Discussion</p>	
<p>7. DPE Report</p> <p>7.1. MF outlined the paper, highlighting that they have started working with the College to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on exams and assessments. It is highly unlikely there will be the same safety net in the same format it has been last year but there will still be things in place to ensure students can do their best.</p> <p>7.2. MF noted there has not been a lot of progress on the NSS response due to other pressing issues but one of the key things currently being reviewed is student spaces as there has been funds made available for refurbishing student spaces and MF has been working with the College to review which spaces to invest into.</p> <p>7.3. Regarding Rep support and training, MF informed Council that there are currently 0 staff members in the representation and advice team in the Union, but recruitment is currently underway for this role.</p> <p>7.4. MF added that the mandatory lecture recording paper she brought to Council last month has made some progress and there should be an official policy in place shortly which will be beneficial for all students.</p> <p>7.5. SR added that a lot of students have concerns around teaching, not knowing the exam format and lack of safety net etc. and if these things cannot be immediately addressed, students would like transparency from their departments and the Union about why certain decisions have been made and questioned if MF is in a position to encourage this further or provide information to student's reasons given by the College to the students.</p> <p>7.6. MF stated that if any departments are not clear on exam formats, they should speak directly to their DepReps, Faculty Rep or directly to MF so this can be resolved.</p> <p>7.7. SS added there is sometimes a disconnect between what is said in College meetings and what students are told in departments. Therefore, if things are uncertain at the departmental level, it is key to speak with the Officers so they can resolve this.</p> <p>7.8. MK said that in the survey he conducted, students also mentioned that they were concerned that marks are being scaled down due to cheating so students would like this addressed. MF said there will not be any exam proctoring this year.</p> <p>7.9. Chair put the report to members of Council to vote. The results are as follows: 23 approve.</p> <p>7.10. Paper was therefore accepted by Council.</p>	
<p>8. DPW Report</p> <p>8.1. SS briefly outlined his paper, highlighting on his current work with the buddy scheme during the Christmas period, the club culture disciplinary matter as well as his involvement with College in regard to the new lockdown.</p> <p>8.2. SS added there is a keenness from the College to discuss student wellbeing in more depth which will be addressed in detail at the upcoming CWB meeting.</p>	

<p>8.3. SS added that a lot of his objectives have had to be paused due to a lack of staff support at the Union but once they have recruited for these roles, this should be picked up again.</p> <p>8.4. Chair put the report to members of Council to vote. The results are as follows: 24 approve and 2 abstain.</p> <p>8.5. Paper was therefore accepted by Council.</p>	
<p>9. DPCS Report</p> <p>9.1. RU took the paper as tabled, highlighting that annual budgeting has started for CSPs and there has been some fairly significant changes in the policy this year which clubs will need to carefully review.</p> <p>9.2. RU said that sports clubs will be following a different process but still under the same policies and principles of funding.</p> <p>9.3. RU added that he is continuing to advocate for active travel and has had conversations with RBKC about the removal of the cycle lane in High Street Kensington.</p> <p>9.4. RU noted he will be talking to CSP volunteers about student spaces and where best to make the investments for activities.</p> <p>9.5. RU added that as some staff members at the Union remain on furlough, there may be a delay in responses to queries.</p> <p>9.6. Chair put the report to members of Council to vote. The results are as follows: 26 approve, 1 abstain.</p> <p>9.7. Paper was therefore accepted by Council.</p>	
<p>10. DPFS Report</p> <p>10.1. SL highlighted that since the end of last term, he has been working on completing Sponsorship contracts.</p> <p>10.2. SL added that the Union has hired a new Director of Finance and Resources which is a pivotal role in getting the Union where it needs to be regarding finances and processes, specifically for CSPs.</p> <p>10.3. SL outlined that he had been working on developing and reviewing health and safety policies with an external consultant.</p> <p>10.4. Due to covid-19, bars have not been able to open and there is still uncertainty as to when the bars will be able to reopen fully.</p> <p>10.5. SL added that there has been a lot of work behind the scenes regarding the UCH Redevelopment project with hopes for the initial structural works sign off for the end of February.</p> <p>10.6. SL explained that along with the Student Opportunities and Development team, he will be working on developing a CRM system which will speed up how quickly enquiries get resolved.</p> <p>10.7. AN expressed the lack of response his CSP's have experienced from the finance team and questioned SL on whether there is a rough timeline on when the CRM system would be put in place and if there are any other initiatives to improve responsiveness.</p> <p>10.8. SL explained that the Finance Director has implemented a complete overhaul of how the finance team works, including reprioritising tasks between staff members with the inbox. Due to the amount of planning the CRM system needs to work efficiently, it is likely it will not be active until September/October at the start of the new academic year which allows time for tendering and development.</p> <p>10.9. AN questioned whether there would be any student consultation on the CRM system before implementation. SL explained that the Officers are keen to ensure student input and this will be brought to CSPB for key discussions.</p> <p>10.10. Chair put the report to members of Council to vote. The results are as follows: 22 approve, 1 abstain, 1 reject.</p> <p>10.11. Paper was therefore accepted by Council.</p>	

<p>11. President Report</p> <p>11.1. AS clarified that in terms of the finance team, it is not only systems solutions that are being considered but there will be a review of staff performance and changes to responsibilities between the team.</p> <p>11.2. AS added he had been part of the discussions on levying rent for students as well as supporting the DPE on adapting last years safety net and mitigations for exams which is likely to be tailored specifically for Imperial students.</p> <p>11.3. AS noted there has been less movement on personal projects due to the ongoing pandemic but there has been motion on socially responsible investment as well as access to study for refugees and asylum seekers.</p> <p>11.4. AS highlighted that he had been having conversations with other student leaders about the sectors and things that are commonly impacting them including fees, rent, safety net etc.</p> <p>11.5. SR said that something students have been concerned with is getting in contact with Sabbs and staff at the Union in general and the Union helpdesk number does not connect. SR asked if AS can have oversight of Sabbs and staff responding to students.</p> <p>11.6. AS said he noticed the communication of the Union has been slipping and this will be handled internally. If there are any things that have not been responded to, AS encouraged Council to let him know and this will be discussed with Senior Management at the Union.</p> <p>11.7. Chair put the report to members of Council to vote. The results are as follows: 26 approve.</p> <p>11.8. Paper was therefore accepted by Council.</p>	<p>AS to inform Council of any progress/updates to the online petition system.</p>
<p>Any Other Business N/A</p>	