

## Retaining the Meeting Place of Union Council

Proposer: Dr Lloyd T James (President)

Seconders: India Marsden (Deputy President (Clubs & Societies)), Sam Lee (Deputy President (Finance and Services)), Daniel Lo (Deputy President (Education)), Hayley Wong (CGCU President), Jasmine Crocker (RSMU President), Sam Hammond (ICSMSU President), Alex Auyang (Silwood Chair)

*This paper is a 'response' to another submitted paper: "Changing the meeting place of Union Council", hereafter referred to as 'the other paper'.*

### Union Notes

1. The Union Dining Hall (UDH) has been home to democratic debate and discussion within the Union for over 70 years. It is often referred to as the "historic home" of Union Council.
2. Union Council is the Union's highest forum for democratic decision making.
3. The UDH also features historic boards bearing the names of previous officers of the Union back to 1911.
4. The UDH is the only meeting space in the Union building in which a meeting the size of Union Council could comfortably take place.
5. The other paper primarily focusses on the impact of the current arrangement on a single CSP (Club, Society or Project) – Cheerleading, of which the proposer of the other paper happens to be President.
6. Moving Council to another venue would only open up the space for two additional sessions per month for one single CSP, which for Cheerleading would be in addition to the 14 sessions per month that the club already has in the space.
7. Cheerleading was made aware that the space would not be available one day per month when the original annual booking was made in early September, and did not raise any objections at that time.
8. Cheerleading has been offered alternative days of the week on which they can book the UDH on weeks when Council is in session.
9. Notes (i) and (ii) of the other paper are incorrect/misleading. While supporting CSPs is an important aspect of the Union's role, the Union has a wide range of other responsibilities and calls upon its space, for instance supporting student democracy [1].
10. The Union Dining Hall is a venue that is known to, and easily accessible to, a greater number and wider variety of students than any suitable venue on the College campus.
11. The Union [Accessibility Policy](#) requires that Union Council meetings take place in flat-floor rooms rather than tiered lecture theatres. This means that there are no suitable spaces for Council on the College campus that would not require significant movement of furniture at the start and end of each meeting (and these flat floor spaces are already broadly in demand by CSPs).

### Union Believes

1. A connection between student activities and their history is important for creating a sense of identity and belonging – this is just as true for Council as for other historic bodies within the Union (eg Constituent Unions, Motor Clubs, DramSoc, and other historic clubs and societies).

[1] Going Back to Basics – 2021-2023 Strategic Plan (Imperial College Union)

2. Adopting a purely 'utilitarian' approach to our own space usage within the Union weakens our position when negotiating with College on issues where the same argument applies (e.g. the sale of St Marys).
3. We want to maximise the accessibility of Council to the wider student body – this is helped by holding Council in the same venue consistently, and in a venue in the Union building rather than a College department.
4. Holding Council in the UDH has a relatively minor impact (5 missed evenings in total across the entire year), upon a single club, and is therefore not a significant negative impact on CSPs broadly.
5. Moving Council out of the UDH will have a range of negative impacts on Council's accessibility, the experience and engagement of members of Council, and the Union's ability to articulate the importance of identity and belonging in spaces and estates to the College.

### **Union Resolves**

1. To continue to hold meetings of Union Council in the Union Dining Hall.