

Supporting Faculty Union Presidents as Elected Representatives

A Paper by the City & Guilds College Union President

Seconded by:

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Imperial College Union Council Notes:

1. The City & Guilds College Union and Royal College of Science Union Presidents have been removed from the Engineering Studies Committee (ESC) and the Science Studies Committee (SSC) respectively.
2. The ICSMSU President still has a seat on the Faculty of Medicine Studies Committee (MSC) because the academic structure of the ICSMSU is different to the other Faculty Unions.
3. The Student Written Submission for the QAA makes a point of criticising the College for not allowing the CGCU to send a student representative to the Engineering Faculty Teaching Committee:

“At a faculty level, student representation is inconsistent. Of particular concern is the lack of a student representative on the Faculty Teaching Committee (FTC) in the Faculty of Engineering. The Faculty of Natural Sciences has a student representative on its FTC, but attempts to extend this to Engineering have been met with severe resistance. Although we have been given assurances that a student representative may be allowed in the future, we feel that progress in this area is too slow, particularly as student representation in other faculties is well developed.”

4. The CGCU President was not informed that the seat on ESC had been removed until less than 24 hours before the first meeting of the committee. This gave the CGCU President no time to formulate any comments to be taken to the meeting on behalf of all Engineers and also meant that the President had not seen the papers for the meeting.
5. The Studies Committees previously had three student representatives; the Academic Affairs Officer and Deputy President (Education) still attend.
6. The Faculty Union President job descriptions include the following lines:

“The Presidents of the Faculty Unions shall:

i. Represent the interests of their members at the appropriate Union, Faculty and College Committees,
v. In the case of Faculty Union Presidents, Graduate Students’ Association Chair, the Overseas Societies Committee Chair, Silwood Park Chair and Wye College Union Society President, be responsible to the Deputy Presidents (Education) and (Welfare) for the education and welfare issues of their members,”

7. The CGCU President no longer holds a seat on any College Committees meaning that formal dialogue between the College and the CGCU President has been lost.
8. A working group involving the previous Deputy President (Education and Welfare) agreed to the downsizing of the student representatives on the Studies Committees as a matter of ‘proportionality’.
9. The student:staff ratio in the Faculty of Engineering and Faculty of Natural Sciences is 15.1:1 and 13:1 respectively.

Imperial College Union Council Believes:

1. The Faculty Union Presidents are elected as representatives of the students in the respective Faculties. Attending College Committees is a fundamental part of this representative role.
2. Arguing for increased representation on the Teaching Committees in the Student Written Submission while not batting an eyelid at decreasing representation on the Studies Committees is counter-intuitive.
3. 'Proportionality' of student representation on College Committees is arbitrary. Proportionality can only be measured against student:staff ratio which would indicate that students should outnumber staff on College Committees which is absurd. The membership is only proportional to previous incarnations of the committee and is not based on any statistical methods.
4. Increased student representation is a positive thing.
5. The Faculty Union Presidents should be recognised by the College in the roles they have been elected to.
6. Imperial College Union should protect and support the roles of the Faculty Union Presidents in representing their constituent members.

Imperial College Union Council Resolves:

1. To mandate the President and the Deputy President (Education) to negotiate on behalf of the Faculty Union Presidents for seats on the Engineering and Science Studies Committees to be reinstated.
2. Imperial College Union should seek to protect student representation on College Committees, and strive to increase it where necessary, in light of any future committee restructuring.