

Imperial College Union
Deputy President (Finance & Services) Report
A Note by Ravi Pall

This report is an amalgamation of last month's council report and this month. Last Council I was ill during the lead up to and on the day of Council, which combined with the number of projects at the time, meant I could not write my report on time. Again, for this report, timing has not been perfect due to a number of personal issues, however this should be comprehensive enough for your review. I would also like to point out that I have a certain feeling that council has lost some substance with regards to accountability of Sabbatical Officers. I feel that reports are scrutinised correctly, but there is a lack of scrutiny in regards to wider college issues not covered in them (if they exist at all). Inevitably as students of Imperial College you are on the front line, and as such there should be questions that are most likely missed in our reports. I urge you to give it some thought. Also I feel that Felix should be presenting a report every council as stated in the Felix policy, not once a term (Sorry Kads).

Clubs and Societies

Since last Council, Club, Society and Project budgeting has begun. As such, it has been doing very well, with almost every relevant club submitting their budget on time (by Feb 7th). Some was shown leniency due to them being new clubs with inexperienced committees, however I am (and will continue to be) very strict. Budgeting is a very important process, which take a relatively short time. As of February 8th Management groups were able to progress with their first round of allocations. This year seems set to be the best budgeting round to date, especially with RWB on board to create the most detailed budgets they can possibly produce. Keep up the good work, Heather and I are very impressed so far.

As far as allocations in the broader sense goes for budgeting, Exec has since approved that the minimum funding received by each CSC will be 80% of that last year, minus the underspend from last year. Additionally Exec has also approved final figures for the subvention split to student activities. These remain largely the same as last year, except that for CSB awards to clubs. This has increased by roughly 5% to accommodate for inflations, and VAT increase (Of which a large fraction of our club turnover is unable to claim back). Long story short, we are all ready for this year's budgeting meeting, which will be delightful. We might even have Pizza, who knows.

CSB has also approved various tours for the spring tour period. This has now been allocated. In addition news to this, we have had confirmation from IC Trust that they will be awarding us the usual £19.5K and are even having a meeting to discuss giving us additional funding for tours. This also means that we are currently working of retrospectively distribute funds from IC Trust allocations to the autumn tour period.

Commercial Services & Entertainments

FiveSixEight & Metric are both doing very well. There have been some operation changes to the way we split the venue on some nights, which upon feedback is looking very favourable for our patrons. We are also in a process of moving some of our full time staff onto permanent contract for various payroll and employment reasons. Overall I am very pleased with the progress in these two areas, especially after the delay of both these venues. We have recently been reviewing and are substantially improved service levels. We have now all come to agreement that certain operational procedures will come into place to provide our members with a more professional service, including shorter waiting times, and better product knowledge.

I am also working with the Operations Manager to create representation structure for student staff. This is an area that includes hundreds of students, all of whom work for the union in some capacity. The intention is to utilise this representation structure to gain valuable feedback from the people who understand both

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our commercial service side, and as users of those services. It will also allow them to voice their opinions in a more formal manner, and hopefully improve working conditions and happiness for all involved.

We also held our second recruitment session mid January, which was well attended. This was a much needed boost to our casual staff workforce at the particular time. This was during a period where many students had exams, and more staff was needed to cover them. However with even more staff in the areas that needed it, we should now be fully staffed at all necessary times. This should lead to an overall improvement of service.

The "We Are Metric" Club and Society nights are working extremely well. Every day I see a fantastic new poster for an interesting and alternative night out in the union. I am pleased that after the initial hurdle of the nightclub delay, these nights are now becoming an established trend. Combined with the great nights the central union is planning to host, this term is definitely the best for entertainments I have seen at my time at Imperial. I am particularly looking forward to the 18th and 19th of February. In addition to these club and society nights, we are also helping the Royal College Of Music host a charity event in Metric on the 28th of February, which has a great line up, and attendance will be open to the RCM, RCA and Imperial.

Finally, I am starting to look into our EPOS systems, which we use in the bar and retail outlets. This is something that we may be looking into replacing over the summer period, and will provide a whole host of benefits.

Finance

We have had a number of applicants for the head of finance position, of which the President will be interviewing 4 of them. We should have someone new soon if all goes well. This is good news, and I'm sure you will all be happy with our choice. We have also had counter culture (an external finance company) come in to review our financial procedures. I'm glad to say that they are progressing well, and I imagine I will be working closely with them over the next month to improve and create procedures, which will regiment our operations.

The online claim forms project is also going very well. We have a final version of the user requirements, which encompass all the areas necessary to make online claims as easy as possible. This also involves changing the structure of our authorisation process, and is something counter culture will be formalising procedures for. As a consequence to these changes, and the previous discussion on the role of honorary Senior Treasurers within Imperial College Union, there will be a few constitution changes to regulation 8. I imagine this will come to the next council meeting for your review along with other constitution changes the president is currently working on.

I've encountered a few issues with college payroll not willing to pay our casual staff wages. This is predominantly due to them slightly exceeding the college guidelines of student only working 20 hours per week outside of studies. An issue arises when a few of our more experienced employees are on full bursary who are contractually allowed to only work an average of 6 hours per week over the bursary period, meaning they can only effectively work 8 hours per week. We have been able to comply to this rather rapidly, however I am going to continue to talk with college payroll about special circumstances such as the summer ball. This is where our student staff puts in a lot of work, and it would be crippling to not give the opportunity to them to work during these periods.

Lastly we are beginning to put together our annual subvention bid. This is where we put together a proposal budget to college in order to gain the best subvention income possible.

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Summer Ball

We have almost come to complete agreement between college departments with regards to the date for the summer ball. It will be on the 18th of June, and college departments involved are happy with our intentions to use more of the college space (such as princes gardens) as well as starting the vent much earlier. This should maximise the value for money some students would usually miss on by not attending or only attending for a short time (those with exams). We had thought about hosting the ball a week later, however there were several complications. For example the stages we need to hire will be at Glastonbury festival. In other news, I will be meeting up with my student-working group soon to gain more student perspective. The Operations Manager has drafted a few preliminary budgets, which should leave us in a sound financial state. He has also been talking with other student unions who have expressed an interest in the ball, so hopefully this year it will be bigger in terms of attendance, acts and facilities.

Meetings

The only college meeting I have attended recently was the Information Systems Security Group (ISSG) where we discussed certain security issues such as pirating software and security awareness.

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