

Imperial College Union
Council Chair Report
A note by the Council Chair – Michael Foster

Constitution Changes

The changes to the Union Constitution went through two phases in Council, amongst wider consultation. At the first meeting of Council, a paper for discussion was put forward proposing the changes and providing reasons for them. The overview document provided a chance for preliminary discussion in Council. No vote was taken at this time, as no resolutions were proposed, but the discussion was brief and uncontroversial.

The full proposed Constitution and Bye-Laws were submitted to the second Council, along with various other documents for reference. These documents were submitted following consultations between the President and other members of Council. Council received written and verbal representations from Union Court, and was attended by four student trustees and two lay trustees – I would like to thank them all for attending and contributing to the discussion. Following a substantial and structured discussion, with some minor amendments accepted (especially to Bye-Law G, Minor Elections), the new Union Constitution and Bye-Laws were passed unanimously. They now require, to various degrees, approval from the Trustee Board, College Council and the Charities Commission.

Widening Participation & International Students

This paper discussed two issues: the treatment of international students in regard to immigration statistics; and how to widen participation by identifying suitable candidates from less advantaged backgrounds. Discussion was quite involved on the latter issue, with Council members proposing a good number of resolutions and expanding the scope of the policy. I was encouraged to see Council members taking such an active role in an area that has historically been seen as dry and academic. I anticipate receiving other papers from members of Council as a result of this discussion, which was quite expansive.

Court Nominations

Council formally approved the Executive Committee's recommendations for appointments to Union Court. Three student members are continuing in their positions, and there is one new appointment.

Other Policies and Responses

The first meeting of Council also approved various other policies and responses, which all passed with little discussion. The first was a response to the Institute for Public Policy Research's call for evidence in its 'Commission on the Future of Higher Education'. The second was a paper resolving to lobby the government to find alternative funding sources to ensure open-access academic publishing, and the final paper criticised the use of 'value-added' scores in the formulation of university league tables.

Renewal of Policies

The following policies were renewed without amendments in the first Council:

Trustee Board
8 November, 2012

1. Trading At Freshers' Fair Policy
2. Transport Policy
3. Reserved Powers Policy
4. Mike The Micrometer Policy
5. Prayer Space
6. Use of Electronic Communication Devices Policy
7. Equal Opportunities Policy

Two policies were renewed with minor amendments:

1. Preservation of Queen's Lawn
2. Environmental Policy

Ordinary Members

Elections for Ordinary Members of Council closed on 23 October, with 11 new members of Council elected by a cross-campus ballot. Five positions are unfilled; nominations have re-opened for these posts.

Michael Foster
5 November 2012