

Felix Policy Covering Note

A note by the Union President – Paul Beaumont

1. Throughout the organisation, Imperial College Union is continuously looking to improve cost effectiveness and value for money in everything that we do.
2. Each year the Union bears the cost of the Felix Editor, a sabbatical officer, which stands at £35,000.
3. The Union also provides a stream of income to the newspaper through advertising. Each year this is roughly
 - a. Careers Fair: £1,000
 - b. SK Bar: £2,000
 - c. Entertainments: £3,000
4. This makes a fiscal contribution, not considering the sum of the resources and space provided to Felix, of around £41,000.
5. Earlier this year, the financial state of Felix was to the order of £20,000 overdrawn. The Felix Editor was however able to return the paper to the black when pressed by the Executive Committee to take action.
6. Previous Editors have been successful in procuring large amounts of advertising; others have undersold – despite the position being a full time sabbatical office.
7. Felix is the only club or society to have a sabbatical officer paid for by the Union; the ICSMSU fund their own sabbatical officer.
8. The Union wishes to continue providing an 'editorially independent' student newspaper – but as with all Union services, wishes for this to be as cost effective as possible. Changing the finance model would ensure that the Union is able to continue to have a sabbatical Felix Editor.
9. The Central Services Marketing team believe that they would be able to reduce the financial burden of Felix on the organisation by increasing advertising sales for the paper. This is partly achievable due to the economies of scale and marketing portfolio with which the Marketing team currently operate (Union website, all student emails, Union screens and on campus stalls). This would be in keeping with Felix's position within the Union of holding the rest of the organisation to account for making best use of funds.
10. Other considerations to be made, in addition to the wish to reduce the financial burden of Felix, are considerations around the Financial Risk (regarding the Editor not invoicing, etc) of running a newspaper.
11. Adopting this Policy would save the Union in the region of £10,000 each year.

	Current	Proposed
Sabbatical Salary	(£35,000)	(£35,000)
Advertisements	(£6,000)	
Printing		(£31,000)
Advert Sales		£35,000
Total	(£41,000)	(£31,000)
Saving		£10,000

12. The Felix Editor has been consulted on this proposal.

Beliefs

1. That the Union should look for cost effective ways throughout the organisation of providing services it already runs, to the same quality, enabling funds to be invested in new services and initiatives.

Decisions

1. To adopt the proposed Felix Policy

FELIX POLICY

Introduction

1. What follows is a proposal for the minimum which the Union should require of Felix – we would expect our student newspaper to provide far more. The Editor should be charged with fulfilling these requirements, whilst maintaining Editorial freedom (as explained below), in the best way that he or she sees fit.
2. As Felix holds a unique position in the Union, balancing its role as a student service with the needs of a student-led society, its aims, needs and requirements fall into two distinct categories, which are tackled independently below.

As a service

3. Felix should be a news driven publication, ~~published-printed~~ on a weekly basis and distributed to every major teaching site during term. News should be published online on at least a weekly basis, including outside of term time. Coverage of news relevant to students at the College should be the primary focus – in other words, the cover or front page should be news based, and Editorial priority should always be given to news, ahead of all other material. However, this should in no way be interpreted as an attempt to block the publication of any other content.
4. All Union clubs and societies and projects should be given the ability to publicise and report on their activities. ~~To this end, all parts of the Union should receive preferential advertising rates, to be set at a level no higher than twice the marginal cost of printing the advert itself.~~ Space should ~~also~~ be set aside each week for articles from clubs and societies who wish to report on recent events (although this does not give clubs the right to demand publication, as the Editor should maintain the right to rule out articles on the grounds of literary style, excessive length or irrelevance). Deadlines to be set by the Editor for both adverts and articles should be set at the beginning of the year and circulated widely, and the Editor should be free to reject any material which fails to meet these deadlines.
5. The successes and failures of the Union's sports clubs should be covered on a weekly basis, through match reports etc. However, the precise nature of this coverage (in particular the option to choose between accounts written by players and independent reports) shall rest with the Editor.
6. The Union should be given the opportunity to report on its activities and concerns, through Presidential columns and reports from other sabbaticals and representatives. However, Felix must remain editorially independent of the Union, and therefore all Union articles must be clearly marked as such, and subjected to exactly the same editorial controls as any other column or feature.
7. Space must be provided for feedback from the student body concerning both Felix itself and the issues raised within its pages (particularly those concerning the actions of the Union and College management). Naturally, the Editor should maintain the right to edit letters as he or she sees fit (and sensibly limit the total number of letters printed), but this right should not be used to bias open debate or counteract criticism of the newspaper itself.
8. The Editor should strive to promote student involvement in Union activity wherever possible – in particular, key meetings (Union Council, ~~Court, E~~General Meetings etc) should be clearly advertised, and attention drawn to them where necessary. Note that this requirement does not mean that the Editor should promote the decisions or actions or these meetings, only the fact that students have a right to attend them. The Editor shall also ensure that sabbatical elections are given extensive coverage, which shall include advertising the opening of

nominations, hustings and the elections themselves, and the publication of manifestos for all candidates, including ~~New Election~~ Re-Open Nominations.

9. Welfare issues of importance to the student community should be given due coverage, and the Editor should liaise with campus support services (Accommodation Office, Health Centre, College Counsellors, Union Advisor etc) to ensure that all students are both aware of the services available and fully briefed on key topics.

10. Felix shall abide by the Union's Equality & Diversity Policy in all articles, online content and comments.
9.

~~10-11.~~ In the pursuance of all the points above, Felix shall be editorially free to operate and report on events as the Editor sees fit, as long as he or she is not acting against the wider student interest (which may or may not coincide with the interests of the Union).

As a club

~~11-12.~~ As a club, run by the Editor in the interests of its members (defined for the purposes of this document as regular writers, photographers, editorial staff etc), Felix shall have the right to publish anything and everything (within the constraints of civil and criminal law). The Union's Trustee Board, upon taking legal advice, shall determine to what extent content is within the constraints of civil and criminal law, though the onus is on the Felix Editor to check this with the Board.

~~12-13.~~ Students must be given the right to reply to any article published, ~~in accordance with Section 2 of the Press Complaints Commission Code of Practice~~. In the case of controversial Felix articles, the Editor should ~~attempt~~, wherever possible, ~~to~~ present the views of opposing sides in the initial article.

14. All students from all campuses must be given the opportunity to write for Felix, and the Editor should strive to print all material which is of an acceptable standard of English.

~~13-15.~~ Felix shall abide, as a club by all other Union policies relating to the operation of clubs, societies and projects.

Control and Responsibility

16. The Editor shall oversee and manage all aspects of the running, production and dissemination of Felix – he or she alone shall be responsible to the Union for every article and picture printed, and for the financial integrity of the newspaper. Under no account shall any Union officer (including the Union President) have the right to insist on the inclusion of any material (although they may appeal to Council if they feel that the material should be included as part of the "service" provision above).

17. The Union's Central Services shall manage all advertisements printed in Felix (for the Union, external companies and clubs and societies), and shall pay for the printing of the paper and for the remuneration of the Felix Editor as a sabbatical officer.

18. The Union shall fund 28 issues of the paper, up to a maximum of £28,000 annually, plus a termly publication of iScience up to a maximum cost of £3,000 annually.

19. The Felix Editor will make space for all advertisements sent for inclusion in the paper and iScience and shall be notified of advertising requirements by Wednesday 5pm prior to Felix being published on Friday.

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20. Sister publications may be funded by the Union on an ad hoc mutually agreed basis between the Felix Editor and the Union's Central Services Manager.

44-21. The Union's Central Services shall pay Felix 50% of any additional advertising income above the cost of the Felix sabbatical's remuneration and the cost of printing the paper, should such income be achieved.

45-22. The Editor shall present a termly written report to Union Council, and shall be present at every meeting to answer questions from the floor.

46-23. The Editor should strive to hold regular (preferably fortnightly) meetings of the Editorial Board (as defined in the Felix Constitution), at which all members should be given the chance to hold the Editor to account.

47-24. Felix, as are other Union publications, is required to comply with the Press Complaints Commission Code of Practice, which in the Union is adjudicated upon by the Union ~~Court~~Trustee Board.

48-25. The Editor is responsible in his or her role as a Union employee to the President, without prejudice to the Editor's operational and editorial independence, and with the President acting under the constraints set out in this policy and elsewhere.

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