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13 November 2012

Imperial College Union
Proposal to BUCS Advisory Group
By Henry Whittaker, Deputy President (Clubs & Societies)

Background

Imperial College London currently competes as two institution titles in the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) competition framework - Imperial College and Imperial Medicals. This is a historical remnant from when the various Medical Schools were merged to become the Imperial College School of Medicine and is reflected in that we still have separate clubs for many sports. In 2011 a process was out in motion to fundamentally change how medical students are entered into BUCS and the rules governing this.

On Thursday 14 July 2011 the BUCS Annual General Meeting was held. Agenda item 5(a) proposed a change to the BUCS Articles of Association rules on Further Education membership and a change to regulation 7. This change has no direct impact on Imperial College Union.

The various papers are available online at

<http://www.bucs.org.uk/page.asp?section=14278§ionTitle=AGM>

However contention arose from Further Information point 2 of paper 5(a) which stated:

2. Some further anomalies remain – BUCS is aware that some HEI's currently permit some schools or departments within HEI's to compete as individual members despite actually being a formally recognised part of the University (This applies mostly to former medical schools). BUCS will work with those institutions affected by this to remove this anomaly in the coming year with a view to all such arrangements ceasing from 2012. Any institutions which wish to make this change immediately are welcome to do so.

After discussion on the evening before the AGM with the affected institutions this point was removed from consideration, though the remainder of the paper was passed. At the time BUCS stated that they would be in consultation with the affected Institutions in the coming year to bring about the change.

Unfortunately this change has now been passed through the BUCS governance structure as it has been shown that the medical institution have an unfair advantage. After the BUCS AGM of 2011 a consultation period was opened to allow each institution to submit an alternative solution to the BUCS advisory group.

The unfair advantage is the potential for a medical and parent institution to have twice the number of teams. This is unfair as a medical student can play for medical and non-medical teams. This means that a medical student could have the choice of playing for one of two teams in the premiership whereas a student in every other university can only play for one team in the premiership. The same advantage is true for non-medical students playing for medical teams.

The two current proposals from BUCS can be seen in Appendix B – Letter from BUCS.

Sport Imperial

The priority of Sport Imperial is for the pooling of BUCS points and in the view of most of the sports teams a hope that the top medic players will move to the top IC teams. In the view of the sports teams this is not an important consideration. In reality the increase in BUCS points would be minimal and would not result in any movement in the league.

- 1) Arguments for playing as one institution
 - a) In the premier (top) leagues a glass ceiling is applied where only one team is permitted per institution, therefore one institution potentially being able to enter two teams is unfair.

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- b) If all BUCS points fall under one Institution, our standing could be improved in the overall national league table (though this is not a goal of the Union). When considering all institutions affected this would not cause a change.
- c) The rule has always existed and Imperial has just been unnoticed, BUCS is simply rectifying this.

2. Arguments against playing as one institution

- d) Imperial Medicals have a strong sense of identity with their own teams. Playing as one institution could diminish this.
- e) One of the key strategic aims of BUCS is participation, and if fewer teams can be entered this change could reduce participation.

Problems with each Option

Option 1:

- 1. We believe that the status of Medical Schools should be retained for historical, heritage and practical reasons around access to sport. This move towards amalgamation threatens the identity, history and tradition associated with Medical Schools.
- 2. Whilst the institutions merge, the individual clubs will not due to practicalities of campus location and student timetables. Option 1 does not allow our clubs to properly compete against each other and there are potential issues of promotion and demotion.
- 3. The Medic and non-Medic clubs are entirely separate operationally. With a merged team structure one team pulling out of a fixture from the Medics club will not only affect their lower ranked teams, but also the non-Medics teams below them in the league.

Option 2:

- 1. Students registered under Medical Faculties are not necessarily medical students and may not study on the same campus. As such they do not identify with Medical Schools but would be forced to compete for them. This option suggests a fundamental lack of understanding of the operation of Medical Faculties.
- 2. For smaller team sports where only one team can be fielded, participation would not be sufficient to field both a Medic and non-Medic team, resulting in a lack of participation opportunities for medical students. This applies particularly to some women's sports.
- 3. When institutions have over 2500 students as members of their sports clubs, enforcing the separation of students by Faculty is near impossible. It is also against most institutions' Equal Opportunities policies to limit participation in clubs making the enforcement of Option 2 infeasible.

For the previous year this change has been resisted by the medical schools but after this period BUCS are pushing for this change to happen this year. Several discussions have been had with the ACC clubs, ICSM clubs, Sports Imperial and BUCS. This has led to the development of two proposals that BUCS will accept to the next Advisory Group meeting for consideration.

Proposal A

Status quo with league by league restrictions applied to prevent the unfair advantage.

IC (parent institution) and ICSM (sub-institution) will be registered as 2 separate BUCS members.

Students at Imperial College London will be internally classified as either IC or ICSM as follows:

- All students belonging to the Faculty of Medicine will be classified as belonging to both ICSM (as the sub-institution) and to IC (as the parent institution)
- All other students will only be classified as belonging to IC

Therefore ICSM-classified students will be able to compete for both ICSM and IC – this maintains a fair level of participation opportunities for all students.

Of the two proposals here A is less likely to be accepted but resembles a solution closest to the status quo. After some discussion it was shown that B was unfair to medical students and IC teams, due to ICSMSU teams being able to make a decision for ICSM students. In light of this we recommend that proposal A is submitted to BUCS as shown in Appendix A.

If the BUCS Advisory Group accept an option it will be added to the options available to all institutions.

Resolution: Approve BUCS proposal for submission to BUCS for consideration at the next Advisory Group.

Proposal B

Option 1 with the opportunity for individuals and for medic teams within clubs to opt out of competing under IC to compete under ICSM

- Once these clubs have chosen to opt out and compete under ICSM, only medics will be able to compete for these ICSM clubs, and vice versa for the equivalent IC clubs (e.g. Only medics will be able to compete for ICSM Rugby/Netball/Hockey/Badminton/Basketball/Football, and only non-medics will be able to compete for IC Rugby/Netball/Hockey/Badminton/Basketball/Football) - this does not give students the choice to compete for one or the other.
- This also maintains the heritage of the medical schools, while being simple, fair and equitable.
- ICSM individuals/clubs that opt out may wish to merge with IC at a later date. However, once they have merged, there will be no opportunity to opt out again in future.

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Appendix A – BUCS proposal

Proposal for new Option

Background

1. The current status quo gives the potential for an unfair advantage to students at institutions, which are separated into 2 BUCS members (e.g. University and Medical School).
2. Only a small minority would be likely to benefit from this potential advantage; nevertheless we need to ensure that there are sufficient safeguards in place to ensure fairness and equitability without adversely impacting the 3 main aims of BUCS: to further performance, competition and participation.
3. Retaining the history, traditions and identity of medical schools is very important to medical students, as recognised by BUCS.

The following proposal seeks to maintain fairness for all members, while maintaining the identity, heritage and traditions of medical schools.

Proposal

University (parent institution) and Medical school (sub-institution) will be registered as 2 separate BUCS members.

Students at each institution will be internally classified as either a student of the University or a student in the Medical School.

- All students belonging to the Medical School will be classified as belonging to both the Medical School (as the sub-institution) and to the University (as the parent institution)
- All other students will only be classified as belonging to the University

Therefore Medical School-classified students will be able to compete for both their Medical School and the University – this maintains a fair level of participation opportunities for all students.

For team sports:

If the parent University and Medical School have a combined total of more than 1 team in the premier league or more than 2 teams in lower leagues (i.e. leagues other than the premier league) for a particular sport, then the following restrictions would apply to these leagues only:

- Only students classified as belonging to the Medical School would be able to play for Medical School teams
- Only students classified as belonging to the University would be able to play for University teams
- Students classified as belonging to the Medical School would not be able to play for University teams

This would ensure that students do not benefit from the unfair advantage that exists now, while maintaining the participation opportunities and without jeopardising the level of performance and competition.

For individual sports:

- Medical students will be able to choose to compete for either the University or Medical School team

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- Non-medic students will be only be able to compete for the University team



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To all Universities and associated Medical Schools

BUCS has completed its consultation with members around the continued full membership of Medical Schools. This has been under question since the admittance of Further Education Colleges as full members of BUCS from 2011/12 season highlighted that Medical Schools which were actually “departments” of “parent” institutions may enjoy some competitive advantages over other members in terms of access to competitive opportunities, and that institutional treatment was inequitable.

Whilst strong views have been expressed, and the majority opinion is that the status of Medical Schools should be retained for historical, heritage and practical reasons around access to sport, some members felt that the economies of scale that could be derived from amalgamation would deliver a better experience for their students.

BUCS fully respects the opinions of its members, and wishes to enhance the student experience through sport, with no desire to diminish either the opportunities to play sport for students or the experience whilst taking part, therefore we propose the following:

1. Medical Schools and their “parent” institutions will be offered the choice to compete as 2 separate institutions OR as a single entity. See option 1 and 2 for the practical details.
2. Should option one be chosen there will be no option to return to two separate institutions. Should option 2 be chosen both institutions will be able to, at a later stage, combine and become one institution.
3. All students in each member institution may only compete for that institution – in other words, medical school students must compete for the medical school, and may not compete for the parent institution and vice versa.

This decision should be taken jointly by the Medical school and the parent institution, and both should be clear on the consequences of this decision on all of their students.

This proposal is intended to ensure that all institutional members are treated fairly and equitably according to BUCS regulations. It recognises the strong autonomy that medical school members feel towards their institution, and is intended to ensure that the practical difficulties experienced by medical students in the course of their university career are accommodated in a fair manner.

Mark Brian

Head of Sports Programmes

Option One:

To compete as one institution; medical school and parent institution considered as one member institution with the following implications:

One membership affiliation

One main administrator on the BUCScore account through which all team/individual entries are submitted.

Individual entries – one entitlement for guaranteed entries, not one entitlement per institution / medical school.

BUCS points combined.

Team names are ranked with medical suffix, i.e.

University of the Midlands 1st

University of the Midlands 2nd

University of the Midlands (Medical School) 3rd

University of the Midlands 4th

Institutions would have to submit the preferred name/rank according to league status and consideration would have to be given to preservation of maximum numbers of teams per institutions per league, in some instances lowest placed teams in leagues where 2 or more teams from the same institution are now present may be relegated if required.

Option Two:

The Medical School and parent institution as two separate individual members that each receives appropriate membership entitlements including:

Separate member affiliation per parent institution and Medical School

Each affiliate has its own main user BUCScore account through which team/individual entries are submitted.

Each affiliate receives own entitlement of guaranteed entries to individual competitions

Each affiliate accumulates own BUCS Points tally throughout the season

Team ranks are affiliate specific, i.e.

University of the Midlands 1st

University of the Midlands 2nd

University of the Midlands 3rd

University of the Midlands Medical School 1st