

Imperial College Union
Renaming the Deputy President (Finance & Services) Role
A note by the DPFS – Kieron Creagh

Background

The final Council of the 2012-2013 year on the 11 June contained a resolve to:

'To defer the decision to rename the Deputy President (Finance & Services) role until the meeting of Council in January 2014' (see appendix)

This decision came about as a result of a paper written by the last Sabbatical team and taken to Council that looked at each of the roles, what they did and what they didn't do. As a result each Sabbatical role had new remits placed into it. Added into the DPFS role was:

- Student Development and Skills Development,
- Postgraduate Social, and
- Volunteering Accreditation

This change came with little guidance as to what each remit entailed and what it would practically involve day to day. The 1st and 3rd remit are also covered in our Strategic Plan, the document that drives the workload of all Union Staff and as such has targets that need to be met.

Because of these additions to the role a vote was proposed on changing the name of the DPFS role, because this occurred after the Big Elections and how the role would change was not known ultimately the decision was deferred.

Current Situation

It is my opinion that the DPFS role has changed little since last year, the current workload does not permit for large projects and I have not had time to tackle the 'Postgraduate Social' remit apart from providing support to the GSU when required. However this year the Union has provided a lot of help to the GSU and more social events have been run.

With regards to the other two remits the Imperial Plus Scheme has been developed incredibly well by the new Student Development Manager, Nick Snow. Whilst I have attended introduction sessions, given feedback during the development stage and kept an eye on how it has progressed it does not require a significant time commitment.

Currently the main issue for the DPFS workload is that there is a large volume of time consuming procedural tasks that could be performed by a member of staff. Many of these require no decision making processes. This includes online shop refunds, ICT Issues and helping students with minor queries. Some of these things are currently bound by the ICU Finance Manual and Financial Procedures, which are being reviewed and rewritten this term.

Next Steps

I have been engaged in multiple discussions about how to evolve the role in the future, the outcome of this is that an internal review of all the roles should be conducted before the end of the year; any recommendations can then be passed on to the Senior Management Team and the

Sabbatical officers. Council will then have time to decide on any changes in time for the 2015 elections.

After the new Financial Procedures have been approved the DPFS workload will ideally reduce without removing any of the oversight or decision making processes. This time can be better spent pursuing projects only possible for Sabbatical officers. For reference the current DPFS specific job description as per the Bye-Laws are below:

11.4. Be responsible to the President for the services the Union provides,

11.5. Be responsible to the President for day-to-day administration of finances in accordance with the Union's Financial Procedures.

11.6. Be responsible to the President for the finance-related aspects of Clubs, Societies & Projects,

Recommendations

It has been recognised by two years of Sabbatical officers there is a need to review Sabbatical roles, perhaps with specific focus on the DPFS. However currently the role remains the same but is likely to evolve over the next year, this will pin a lot on next year's team. It is therefore a bad time to change the name of the role and we feel it is a bad idea to rush any changes through without first conducting a full review of the roles.

Proposal

- To commit the current Sabbatical team to undergo a review of all the current roles and make recommendations to next years team and staff.
- Not to change the name of the DPFS role.

Appendix

Extract from Council minutes 11 June 2013

- a) In regards to the name of the Deputy President (Finance & Services), the following points were made:
- i. Finance, Community and Development is an accurate reflection of the role.
 - ii. It was suggested to see how the role develops to see what name best fits.
 - iii. It was agreed that if the name changes, it should be 'communities'.
 - iv. It was suggested that the perception of students may be that Council has 'pulled the rug out from underneath' a candidate who stood on the understanding that the role would not be what it has changed to. It was highlighted that the role has not changed dramatically and there is scope to grow the role with the additions of extra remits.
 - v. Council moved to a vote on renaming the role and the vote is as follows:

FOR	0
AGAINST	21
ABSTAIN	6

Falls
- b) It was suggested and unanimously agreed that Council should vote on having Council review the name of the Deputy President (Finance & Services) role in January.

RESOLVED:

- 1) **To defer the decision to rename the Deputy President (Finance & Services) role until the meeting of Council in January 2014**