



Minutes of the Imperial College Union
First Governance Committee meeting of 2014/15
17 September 2014
Meeting Room 6, 16.00

PRESENT:

Alumni Trustee	Andy Heeps – Chair (AH)
Officer Trustee	Abigail du Bruin (ADB)
Officer Trustee	Thomas Wheeler (TW)
Officer Trustee	Pascal Loose (PL)
Council Chair	Paul Beaumont (PB)
<u>Permanent Observers</u>	
Managing Director	Joseph Cooper (JC)
Governance & Administration Manager – Clerk	Rebecca Coxhead (RC)

Apologies: Student Trustee Hiba Saleem Danish

1. CHAIRS BUSINESS

NOTED:

- a) Members were welcomed to the first Governance Committee of the academic year.

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS – none

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING – 17 June 2014

NOTED:

- a) The minutes were passed at the last meeting of Board of Trustees.

4. MATTERS ARISING

NOTED:

- a) In regards to the Bye Laws review, Regulation E, Complaints and Discipline, these will be tested at the first meeting of Council of the Year as there is a Motion of No Confidence in an officer of a Constituent Union being proposed.
 - i. It was suggested that potentially this power should be devolved back to Constituent Unions and Management Groups.

5. ELECTIONS REPORT

NOTED:

- a) The purpose of the report is to get feedback on issues and what lessons can be learnt from these.
- b) It was correct that the Big Elections objectives were ambitious as even though the turnout is high compared to sector, it is still reasonable to expect turnout to increase.
 - i. There is still an expectation to improve the amount and breadth of the nominees.
 - ii. Feedback from those who attended training was positive but this needs to be promoted and in place a lot sooner than this year.
- c) Anecdotally, candidates can be deterred by putting themselves in to the spotlight and open themselves up for criticism. There have been incidents where women were specifically target with sexist comments mostly through online content.
 - i. Officers are working on a Social Media policy which will put defined use and expected behaviours.
 - ii. Dialogue has been opened with the Tab but it was stressed that the Union has no jurisdiction over the Tab and if matters become that of a legal nature, the Union should not be compromised.
 - iii. The majority of online bullying came through anonymous comments and forums on the Tab and Facebook. ICT have the ability to log what students do through their log ins if they are using the college network. It was questioned as to how far can we close the channel of unaccountable abuse.
 - iv. There is a more fundamental issue with Women being hesitant to put themselves in to leadership roles. Imperial is led by a lot of Women so there is an opportunity to utilise them.
- d) International Students have also been highlighted that there is a barrier to engagement with them taking a sabbatical year out.
 - i. Some students are sponsored so they have commitments to return to their home country straight after the completion of study or may have restrictions on them taking a year out.
 - ii. It was recommended that it should be promoted more to the international communities that there are no visa restrictions for International Students to take a year out to be a Sabbatical.
- e) There was a mixed response from clubs using the online voting system.
 - i. A process should be developed that would mean that clubs that meet criteria, such as membership being so large that there is not the physical space for an AGM to be held, then the CSP must use the online system as standard.
 - ii. It was discussed that there should be a cut off for buying membership before the election. It was highlighted that some clubs have free memberships which will need to be considered.
 - iii. It was suggested that feedback from the CSP's should be considered with the consideration that incumbents may potentially be biased towards the system that they were elected by. It was suggested that there could be a process where CSP's election processes must be reported to and approved by the Deputy President Clubs & Societies.
 - iv. It was suggested that Minor Elections should not have closed nominations.
 - v. CSP elections will be considered at the next meeting.

ACTION:

1. To consider CSP elections at the next meeting of the Governance Committee.

- f) In regards to spamming, it can be graphically depicted where the spam emails have gone out to those who have not voted increasing voting turnout.
- g) The last minute change from Summer Elections to 'Postgraduate Elections' potentially hindered turnout.
 - i. It was requested that an individual strategy for the Postgraduate Elections be presented to Governance Committee.

ACTION:

2. To request an individual strategy for the Postgraduate Elections come to Governance Committee.

- ii. It was suggested to talk to the GSU about what they would like to see from these elections.
- h) The Training Plan for Big Elections 2015, it was suggested that Drop In sessions should be included that sabbaticals and staff make themselves available to answer questions that would not be covered in the training sessions.
 - i. It was apparent at the Board of Trustees Away Day that it needs to be made clearer earlier on as to what being a trustee involves.
 - ii. A spate Communications plan for outlying campuses and halls of residence should be considered.
- i) Governance Committee moved to a vote and the Elections Report and Plan was passed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

1) To pass the presented Elections Report and Plan.

6. RETURNING OFFICER FOR YOUR REP AND COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2014

NOTED:

- a) Jessica Silver is employed by College as the Legal Services Officer. Jessica is responsible for the compliance with the Freedom of Information and also the Colleges' Data Protection Officer. Jessica occasional acts as the Clerk to student disciplinary panels.
- b) Governance Committee moved to a vote to recommending Jessica Silver to the Board of Trustees as the Returning Officer for Your Rep and Council Elections and it was passed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

1) To recommend Jessica Silver to the Board of Trustees as the Returning Officer for Your Rep and Council Elections and it was passed unanimously.

ACTION:

1. The Chair of The Governance Committee to put forward the decision of Jessica Silver as Returning Officer for Your Rep and Council Elections 2015 to Board of Trustees for Ratification.

7. DEMOCRACY REVIEW UPDATE

NOTED:

- a) A plan of the proposed Democracy Review is currently being drafted as an outcome of the Strategic and Operating Plan.
- b) Whilst the plan is being drafted, the Union needs to ensure that bodies of work aren't duplicating discussions and coming up with contradictory conclusions.
 - i. There is value in the different discussions occurring within the various groups as long as they are clear in what their purpose of the discussions are and they are working collaboratively.
- c) It was requested that a detailed plan of the Democracy Review come to the next meeting.

ACTION:

1. A detailed plan of the Democracy Review to be presented to the next meeting of the Governance Committee.

8. COUNCIL POLICY AND STANDING ORDERS UPDATE

NOTED:

- a) Clubs, Societies & Project Board is at capacity in its current state and a possible solution is for it to split in to 2 boards – one to consider finances and the other to consider the activities.
- b) It was acknowledged the Executive Committee function has become redundant and this has been shown in the past few years.
- c) There is the ability for the Council Chair position to be 'beefed up' and it to have more of a conduit function between Council and Board.
- d) There needs to be a balance of debate and approach with the opportunity of Sub Committees to be more effective as the consultative forums.
- e) One of the findings of the Democracy Review focus groups is that students are unaware of how to put forward policy or ideas in to forums.
 - i. An idea of having a petition system was discussed, where an idea can be submitted and once it has reached a threshold of signatures, it must come to council for debate.
- f) It was reminded that the Union does not need to be constrained about how the Council has worked in the past.
- g) The fact the Council meetings are regularly not quorate is a symptom of a bigger issue.
- h) It was highlighted that whatever new initiatives or changes that happen, these must be communicated to Council as to why they are being put in to practice.

9. GOVERNANCE MATRIX

NOTED:

- a) The Matrix is trying to identifying what standing items appear across the Board and sub committees to then allow ad hoc discussions.
- b) The Board and Sub committees should be working in synergy and not replicating items so that more high level strategic conversations can occur at Board.
- c) AH, TW and RC to meet to move forward the Matrix discussion.

ACTION:

- 1. RC to schedule a time for AH, TW and RC to meet to discuss the Governance Matrix and Board and its Sub Committees work plans.**

Meeting closed 17.55