

Minutes of the Imperial College Union
Communications Committee
22 March 2016
Room 6, 16.30

PRESENT:

Lay Trustee	Jill Finney – Chair (JF)
Officer Trustee	Ben Howitt (BH)
Officer Trustee	Jennie Watson (JW)
Appointed Student Trustee	Tim Seers (TS)
Appointed Student Trustee	Alex Raposo (AR)
Permanent Observers	
Felix Editor	Grace Rahman
Interim Managing Director	Alex McKee (AMK)
Governance Manager – Clerk	Rebecca Coxhead (RC)

Apologies: Andrew Keenan Interim Head of Student Voice and Communications

1. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

NOTED:

- a) Members of the committee were welcomed to the initial meeting and were invited to think about how the committee would shape itself whilst using the Terms of Reference as a guide.

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT – none

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

NOTED:

- a) The members were asked whether they thought the terms were strategic enough as they should be considered the 'big picture'.
- b) It was reminded that these are a guide and it would be logical to revisit these through the year.

4. CURRENT BRAND REPUTATION/STRATEGIC BRAND POSITION

RECEIVED: The paper was presented by AMK

NOTED:

- a) The Board should consider how it views the Union and how it wishes to be viewed.
- b) In regards to the survey questions, the following points were made:
 - i. The question that pertained to 'radicalisation' was felt too vague on reflection and it wasn't clear how to define this. This leads to the question 'how is democracy understood by the student body'.
 - ii. The Leadership Election occurred just before this survey went out and so the messaging was fresh in students mind set.
 - iii. The question of 'transparency' could have been investigated.
 - iv. Contrasting statements could have been asked to draw out and measure responses.
 - v. A question relating to welfare could have also benefited from being asked; also if students feel that the Union gives them a voice.
 - vi. Outlying campus may have a different perception to that of what the Union is to them and consultation with these members would be useful.

- vii. AMK stated that there are key messages that are tested throughout the various surveys sent to students. It was requested that these are sent to the committee.

ACTION:

1. AMK to send the key messages that are tested throughout the year through surveys to the committee.

- c) In regards to the recommendations on qualities, the following was discussed:
- i. The Union could consider having 'qualities' rather than 'values' when drafting the Strategy and think about what attributes it would like to see itself when portraying its brand.
 - ii. The committee were asked what attributes that would like to see as an 'Imperial College Union' brand and what they aspire these to be. The qualities were:
 - Responsive
 - Dynamic
 - Flexible
 - Relevant
 - Courageous
 - Inclusive
 - Forward facing
 - Open to ideas
 - The 'fixer'
 - Accessible
 - Efficient
 - Contemporary
 - Progressive
 - The fighter
- d) In regards to what Union should be and want to be known for, it was agreed that consultation should take place with the membership to ask what they want.
- i. When thinking about companies that exist, the committee felt an affiliation towards the Co-operative as they take a stance on issues that mean something to them, some of the smaller political parties as they aren't afraid to be controversial.

ACTION:

2. AMK to develop the key 'things' that the Union wants to be known as through consultation and report back to the next meeting.

- e) A piece of work needs to be conducted in regards to identifying key stakeholders and what are the right messages and mediums to send to them; does the Union receive as well as transmit.

ACTION:

3. AMK to lead on identifying key stakeholders and recognise the different qualities that the Union should have with communicating with them. These findings are to be reported back to the next meeting.

- f) The Union needs to feel comfortable in challenging College without fear of 'burning bridges'. There is a political link which needs to be respected as well as a professional link and there needs to be a balance of the two priorities.
- i. It was reminded that the Union should not lose sight of the importance of its political nature and feel confident in being opinionated. .
- g) There are situations where it is difficult to communicate the influence and impact that the officers have made in regards to decisions that College have made; such as the reopening of Evelyn Gardens to non-first year students.
- h) What does the Union want to be known for and what is the balance between a corporate name and a trading name. Is the Union content with having a multiplicity of sub brands.
- i. Students having pride over its union is a challenge.

- ii. When students think about the Union, who do they see the Union as being – their club or Constituent Union
 - iii. The reputation needs to become more valuable so that there is a value that students take away from their interactions.
 - iv. The ultimate goal is there to be a seamless brand that reaches across all sub sections of the union.
- i) In regards to defining Imperial College Union, one of the prime definitions is to be a key source of positive change and not just a building or a bar.

ACTION:

- 4. AMK to consult with stakeholders and present a draft of definitions of what Imperial College Union is for discussion at the next meeting.**

Meeting closed 18.00