

TRUSTEE BOARD**COVER SHEET**

Title:	Union President Report
Agenda item:	Item 9
Action requested:	For discussion
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approaches to communication around College's Smoke-free Policy• West Basement remedial works next steps• Development of our Alumni Offering
Summary of recommendations:	-

Imperial College Union President's Report

Executive Summary

This report does not make an effort to produce a detailed summary of all of my activities since assuming office. Instead, I will present a few projects of interest for discussion, including the College's Smoke-free Policy, the West Basement Remedial Works and relations with the Development Division in College.

College Smoke-free Policy

Background

In September a College working group began discussing smoking on campus, with Union representation provided to the group by the MD. The purpose of the group is to make recommendations to Provost Board on smoking policy, having considered the benefits and potential impacts of a smoke-free campus. One of the options being considered was a blanket smoking ban on all College land to be instigated in the next academic year. We identified that this would have the potential to impact a large portion of our members and subsequently we ran a 36-hour online poll to gauge member opinion with a total of 748 respondents. The majority of respondents (56%) supported a ban on campus, with 29% opposing any ban and 15% agreeing with a ban if an exemption was made for Beit Quadrangle.

This information was taken to the working group adding weight to the argument that further steps, such increased provision and publicity of Smoking Cessation schemes, should be taken to best achieve the aim of improving public health before a ban would be introduced. We also raised concerns over the potential risk to our licencing arrangement should a ban be implemented and the group have agreed to recommend specific exemptions in Beit Quadrangle.

The poll received interest from students and the student press, with a mixture of antagonism and support for both sides. Overall, the impression I gleaned from students was that they were glad there was consultation (this was the first time we ran this sort of poll) and debate on the subject, but there was confusion over whether the Union (and me specifically!) were instigating the possible ban. There were complaints that it appeared to the average member that the Union was spending its time on trivialities as opposed to more important issues.

Discussion

- How effective were the poll and related communications?
- How could they be improved?
- What does this tell us for the wider communication strategy with students on controversial issues?
- How do we manage the closure of this piece of work?

Other reading:

The blog post on the poll: <https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/blogs/president/smoking-campus-what-should-happen>

Felix article on the poll: <http://felixonline.co.uk/news/6298/college-contemplating-smoking-ban/>

(This takes a divestment angle on the proposals)

Beit Quadrangle West Basement Remedial Works

Background

Following the £3.3m redevelopment of the West Basement in October 2014, the Jazz & Rock studio has been closed due to unacceptable levels of noise transmission to the bedrooms above. A combination of inadequate soundproofing and the repositioning of the room to be directly below bedrooms (as opposed to below a kitchen) were causal factors in the intolerable noise level. The result has been that the Jazz & Rock studio has been closed indefinitely, with students having to make do with a Meeting Room for rehearsals or pay to use external facilities.

The original redevelopment project was a Union-College collaboration and it has been viewed that future works to the space should also be collaborative. Toward the end of the last academic year Estates Projects have accelerated the investigation into remedial solutions, and have acquired a proposal and quotations from architects and contractors to prevent vertical noise transmission to the spaces above. The effect on horizontal sound transmission is still to be stated by the architects, but there is hope that significant impedance will be achieved. The project stands ready to be mobilised with works to take place during a period of College leave.

It is expected that the current proposed works would allow the Jazz & Rock studio to reopen, however, if horizontal transmission remains a problem a time-management solution will be required to prevent disturbance to other activities in the basement (i.e. the Jazz & Rock studio may be temporally restricted, to allow ICTV and IC Radio activities in adjacent rooms).

I have met several times with the Estates Projects team, relevant student groups and members of senior College staff on this issue. Since September I have acted as the intermediary between parties. There is wholesale agreement that whatever solution is achieved, it is done with student use in mind and done in agreement with the relevant student groups. Initial distrust held by student groups of Estates Projects staff has been largely overcome and there is appetite from all parties to ensure that a satisfactory, final solution is achieved.

An overview of funding will be provided verbally, but has been discussed previously in the F&R sub-board. I would like to thank the members of the F&R committee for their guidance in September and would also like to thank Laura Fellows for monitoring the project prior to my involvement.

Discussion

- How do we best facilitate out-of-budget expenditures in future?
- Would a small projects pot be useful in budgeting?
- What level of delegation is appropriate to give members when there are significant financial outlays?
- Would it be possible to reach out to anyone with property/construction experience?

Alumni Office and Development Relations

Background

Imperial College's Development Department has undergone rapid expansion in the last three years and have ambitious targets of achieving engagement rates (>15%) comparable with public American Universities. In-line with one of my primary manifesto pledges, I have been working with the Alumni Office and Fundraising team to serve members by: better understand College's current provision for Alumni; advising on their current and future activities; partaking in specific events and initiatives; and find ways of plugging AO activity into our activities (and vice versa). During my interaction with the Development team, I have been impressed by their plans for Alumni support in the near future and believe they compare well to UK and international institutions. This said, College's offering has been focused on Alumni members who are 10, 20 or 30+ years out and the offering for recent graduates is currently underdeveloped compared to other areas.

I have also chaired our internal Alumni SAS meetings and have been enthused by the ideas shared by the other OTs and members of staff. I have also been liaising with various Alumni Associations to learn more about their provisions and interactions with the Alumni Office. There is an opportunity now within the Union to dramatically improve the offering for Alumni, which provides various different benefits and challenges in future years.

Discussion

- What purpose does our offering for Alumni serve, as opposed to College's?
- What are our strengths and where are our opportunities for improving members'/ Alumni experience?
- Are there particular concerns around developing an alumni provision which could see a stepped change in our membership?