

**Imperial College Union Board of Trustees**  
**Managing Director's Report**  
**1<sup>st</sup> February 2017**

**Since October**

It has been a busy few months for the Union with our peak activity levels and operational delivery alongside the work being done to develop our new strategic plan. There have been many wins, both big and small, on behalf of our members as set out in Officer Trustee reports. It is important to recognise the work being done and the positive impact that is being achieved every day to deliver a better experience for all our students.

**Staffing**

There have been two areas with significant changes in staffing since October.

Laura Fellows, our Administration Support Manager, left the Union in November. She had a strong impact across several roles and aspects of the Union, most recently including administration around Board and Sub-Committees. We wish Laura well with her new role much closer to home. After a period without a post holder, I am delighted that we have recently welcomed John Dinnewell into this post.

The Student Activities team saw the Manager, James Lindsay, and Coordinator, India Jordan, leave in December. They led this critically important team and area of work to ever more impressive levels over the last two years and wish them the very best of luck in their exciting new roles within the sector. Their simultaneous departure sparked consideration of necessary mitigation within the team to ensure that our core services to Clubs, Societies and Projects remained strong. Full-time replacements for both posts, will begin with us in mid-February and we have hired an additional 6-month fixed-term Coordinator who joined the team this week. Due to periods of vacancies, this will have a minimal impact on the staffing budget for the team.

Going forward, I am leading a working group to review what we have in place in terms of succession planning and contingency planning to better prepare the Union and our services for turnover in staff and establish good-practise in prioritisation of work streams when this arises.

**Finances – Year to Date**

As always, the Management Accounts in year to date have been scrutinised by Finance & Risk Committee so I will not comment on detail here. The year so far is very positive overall with a £76,250 positive variance to end of December. The more detailed picture includes more fluctuation with very strong performances in SK Bars and Catering somewhat offset by shortfalls within Marketing and Minibuses. These are being examined closely and we understand the factors around budget performance in these areas.

The new structure for our monthly budget holder meetings is proving successful in establishing greater collective responsibility amongst the wider management team for the Unions' finances.

Improved discussions and approaches to our forecasting process, budget recovery plans and interdependencies across budgets are amongst the emergent themes from these meetings.

### **Our Strategy 2017-10**

Following months of consultation and engagement with board members, students, volunteers, Union and College staff we launched *Our Strategy* on 19<sup>th</sup> Jan. The initial response has been very positive from both Students and College and we are following a stakeholder engagement plan, carefully considered by Communications Committee, to ensure that we communicate *Our Strategy* effectively.

### **Values**

As discussed in the development of *Our Strategy*, we have refreshed our values. We have maintained *Democracy* and *Inclusivity* whilst Excellence has been replaced by *Leadership* and Collaboration has been replaced with *Partnership*. These values are often what we turn to when making tough decisions and they are implicit and explicit throughout *Our Strategy*. We are confident that our students already associate with these and they will become increasingly visible in everything we do going forward as we recognise the importance of demonstrating our fulfilment of our values.

### **Announcements**

In order to launch *Our Strategy* with impact and to help people to understand how this will shape the direction of the Union going forward, we made five announcements on the night of the launch. These were: Increased direct funding for CSPs; a network of Welfare Representatives; improved facilities and presence at Non-SK campuses; renewed Life Membership for Alumni; and a more outward looking Union which influences local and national policy.

### **Achieving our strategic objectives**

The delivery of the announcements above and other key themes are being led through SAS working groups which bring together staff and officers across the Union to achieve the objectives.

Flowing from team and department operational plans, these groups will encourage cross-team working and will report centrally to management team.

### **Funding agreement with college**

Now that we have established *Our Strategy*, we will shortly begin negotiating a new three-year block grant agreement with College. This is an important step for the Union as we look to secure a significant portion of the funding required to deliver *Our Strategy*. It will be important to demonstrate the crucial role that we also play in the delivery of the College Strategy 2015-20.

### **Staff survey**

As always, our staff are by far the biggest resource we have in the delivery of all our plans and I am committed to ensuring that staff feel supported, valued and have the opportunity to develop as

individuals and teams. We will shortly be running our staff survey to establish areas that we need to address in order to ensure that we remain an attractive employer.

**Crisis Communication plan**

Attached as an Appendix is our Crisis Communication plan. All Trustees should be aware of this plan so please familiarise yourselves with this. College has run one of two planned Crisis simulation exercises which I am involved in. Following these exercises, we will look at lessons learned from those and explore the options for running our own simulation exercise.

Jarlath O'Hara  
**Managing Director**  
**February 2017**

**Appendix:**

**Crisis communication plan**

## Crisis Communication Resources

**The three steps to follow immediately if a crisis situation arises:**

Step 0	Step 1	Step 2
<b>If anyone is in danger, notify College Security on 4444 immediately</b>	Ensure that a member of the Strategic Management Group is made aware of the crisis situation. This includes the Managing Director, and the Heads of each directorate. Their contact details can be found below. The crisis checklist (below) will be activated and owned by an SMG member.	In the event of a crisis, the Head of Student Voice & Communications (HSVC) will typically lead Imperial College Union's communication response. In the absence of any other arrangements, they will take responsibility for activating a crisis response team, executing the crisis checklist and ensuring contact is made with all key audiences.

**Pack contents:**

- 1. Crisis communication guidance**
- 2. Crisis response team checklist**
- 3. Stakeholder engagement guide and checklist**
- 4. Contact details**
- 5. Holding messages**

### Crisis Communication – Guidance and Resources

This guidance is for any managers or student leaders who potentially find themselves in a crisis situation. The below information will help you understand how to manage the communications aspect of any crisis. The resources will help staff responding to a crisis assure themselves they are managing our reputation and our relationships with our stakeholders effectively.

The three steps to follow immediately if a crisis situation arises:

Step 0	Step 1	Step 2
If anyone is in danger, notify College Security on 4444 immediately	Ensure that a member of the Strategic Management Group is made aware of the crisis situation. This includes the Managing Director, and the Heads of each directorate. Their contact details can be found below. The crisis checklist (below) will be activated and owned by an SMG member.	In the event of a crisis, the Head of Student Voice & Communications (HSVC) will typically lead Imperial College Union's communication response. In the absence of any other arrangements, they will take responsibility for activating a crisis response team, executing the crisis checklist and ensuring contact is made with all key audiences.

#### 1. Why is crisis communication planning important?

- 1.1. An organisation's brand and reputation, no matter how carefully built and maintained, is at risk of serious damage if a crisis situation arises and communications are not appropriately managed.
- 1.2. Imperial College Union relies on productive relationships and a positive reputation with a range of stakeholders, including our membership, our volunteers, College leadership, and our own staff team. A pro-active approach to handling our relationships with each group in the case of a crisis is necessary to reduce the risk of reputational damage.
- 1.3. The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance and resources to use in the case of a crisis. Together, these provide a framework for managing communications and stakeholder engagement relating to any crisis affecting Imperial College Union. The guidance is intended to support managers and volunteers in ensuring that the impact of a crisis on the reputation, standing and viability of Imperial College Union is minimised, while maintaining regulatory compliance and observing good practice from the sector.
- 1.4. This plan does not provide a framework for dealing with all challenges and tasks arising from any given crisis, but specifically its communication and stakeholder aspects.

#### 2. What is meant by 'crisis'?

- 2.1. A crisis is any event or situation that may have an adverse effect on how Imperial College Union is perceived by stakeholders, or that may attract negative attention from the media.

Examples of possible crises include:

- 2.1.1. Injury or death during student-led activities
- 2.1.2. Injury or death in licensed premises
- 2.1.3. Injury or death of staff member
- 2.1.4. Misconduct, whether real or perceived, by a student leader, representative or member
- 2.1.5. Misconduct, whether real or perceived, by a member of staff
- 2.1.6. Financial shortfall that affects the viability of the organisation
- 2.1.7. Natural disasters affecting Imperial College Union activities
- 2.1.8. The proposal or adoption of a policy or stance by elected representatives that threatens our reputation and standing with partners
- 2.1.9. Failure, whether real, predicted or perceived, of a high-profile event or service

### **3. Crisis response team**

- 3.1. Serious crises may require a crisis response team to meet, in order to manage ongoing communication and to monitor developing situations.
- 3.2. The crisis response team should consist of the Managing Director (MD), Head of Student Voice & Communications (HSVC), President, and any other senior managers or student leaders immediately relevant to the situation.
- 3.3. The crisis management team should be as small as possible, and will typically be chaired by the MD.

### **4. Understanding success**

- 4.1. A successful communications response to a crisis will ideally have all of the following features:
  - 4.1.1. Swift assessment of the crisis and its potential implications
  - 4.1.2. Clear leadership and defined responsibilities via a crisis response team
  - 4.1.3. Honest and timely communication, tailored to key stakeholders
  - 4.1.4. Active management of potential impact on our brand and reputation
  - 4.1.5. Structured information flow to enable the crisis response team to monitor the situation
  - 4.1.6. Continued operation of as many services and functions as possible
  - 4.1.7. Minimal negative impact on our brand understanding, reputation and relationships
  - 4.1.8. An evaluation of the crisis and the effectiveness of the communications response

### **5. What enables successful crisis communications?**

- 5.1. Successful crisis communications is reliant on a number of enabling factors. These include effective internal communication practices, the maintenance of strong relationships with external stakeholders, and an understanding of our current reputation with stakeholders. An ethos of crisis preparedness and proactive assessment of risk is also important.

- 5.2. A guide for planning communication with each stakeholder group is included in the resources at the end of this document.

## **6. Evaluation**

- 6.1. Any crisis is also an opportunity to learn lessons and prevent future problems. In certain circumstances, a crisis may present an opportunity to reset or even improve relationships with certain stakeholder groups. For example, swift and effective handling of a difficult situation in the public eye could reassure College leadership or our members about our competence and professionalism.
- 6.2. A member of staff should be allocated responsibility for writing a report on the causes, circumstances, outcomes and learning points of any crisis, for submission to SMG or an appropriate Board subcommittee.

## **7. Maintaining and embedding good practice**

- 7.1. The HSVC will take ongoing responsibility for two documents: the crisis communications plan itself, and also the maintenance of an accurate record of important information such as social media logins, stakeholder contact details, and draft holding statements.
- 7.2. The HSVC will ensure the plan is reviewed annually by the Communications Committee, and is kept accurate in terms of contact details and relevant information. They will maintain a set of draft responses and holding statements
- 7.3. The HSVC will disseminate the crisis communication plan to managers and student leaders across the organisation, to ensure it is known to frontline staff who may be first to be notified of a crisis situation.

## **8. Resources**

- 8.1. Below, you can find:

- 8.1.1. Crisis Response Team Checklist
- 8.1.2. Stakeholder engagement guide and checklist
- 8.1.3. Contact details
- 8.1.4. Holding messages

**Crisis response team checklist**

This checklist denotes steps that must be taken in the case of a crisis. It is not exhaustive; every step must be taken, but the absence of a measure from this list does not mean it is therefore unnecessary.

Task	Outcome	Completed?
Convene urgent meeting	The crisis response team (CRT) and any relevant other parties have met or otherwise communicated	
Prepare and distribute brief	The HSVC or other team member has briefed the crisis response team on the situation	
Agree initial assessment	The CRT has discussed and agreed the nature of the crisis and the risks it poses	
Agree and verify position	The CRT has determined whether the organisation is at fault	
Agree initial messages	The CRT has agreed messages, whether holding or permanent, for every stakeholder group	
Communicate	The CRT has activated the cascade system and other broadcasting methods to disseminate the agreed messages to stakeholder groups	
Agree management plan	The CRT has agreed the frequency and time of future meetings to manage the situation	
Maintain information flow	The CRT has decided who will take responsibility for updating them on the situation, and how often updates will be circulated	
Evaluate	The CRT has ensured that an evaluation process of the crisis and of the response to it has begun and that its recommendations will be treated appropriately	



Stakeholder engagement guide and checklist

Stakeholder group	Message qualities	Method	Owner	Message drafted?	Message communicated?
College leadership	Formal, professional, full disclosure	Personal phone calls, followup email	MD		
Student leadership	Formal, professional, full disclosure, reminder of discretion	Personal phone calls, followup email	MD/Pres		
Membership	Formal, professional, appropriate information, multimedia	Email, web content, social media	HSVC		
Alumni	Formal, professional, appropriate information, multimedia	Web content, social media	HSVC		
Peer group of affected student/staff (if relevant)	Formal, professional, appropriate information, direct	Email, group meeting	MD/Pres		
Partner organisations	Formal, professional, appropriate information, direct	Personal phone calls	Relationship owner		
Media	Formal, professional, appropriate information, direct	In writing when possible	HSVC		

Contact details

Role	Roleholder	Email	Landline	Mobile	Called?
Managing Director	Jarlath O'Hara	<a href="mailto:j.o'hara@imperial.ac.uk">j.o'hara@imperial.ac.uk</a>	020 7594 9997	07714 215510	
Head of Student Experience & Services	Paul Buckley	<a href="mailto:p.buckley@imperial.ac.uk">p.buckley@imperial.ac.uk</a>	020 7594 8125	07590 250 452	
Head of Finance & Resources	Malcolm Martin	<a href="mailto:m.martin@imperial.ac.uk">m.martin@imperial.ac.uk</a>	020 7954 8070	07714 051 253	
Head of Student Voice & Communications	Andrew Keenan	<a href="mailto:a.keenan@imperial.ac.uk">a.keenan@imperial.ac.uk</a>	020 7594 5387	07957 166 612	
Union President	Nas Andriopolous	<a href="mailto:union.president@imperial.ac.uk">union.president@imperial.ac.uk</a>	020 7595 8061	07794 844 673	
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College duty press officer	Rota	n/a	n/a	07803 886 248	

**Holding messages**

**“We have implemented our crisis response plan, which places the highest importance on the health and safety of our members. We will be supplying additional information when it is available via our website and social media”**

**“The situation is still evolving, and we will keep you updated as soon as we have more information”**

**“Discriminatory behaviour is not accepted on our premises and we will investigate all allegations thoroughly”**