

Affiliation with Citizens UK

Author: Nas Andriopoulos, Union President

Seconded: Alex Chippy Compton, ICSMSU President

Background

Citizens UK (CUK) is a charity with the aim to bring communities together to campaign on issues for the common good.

CUK is divided up into chapters across the UK. Imperial College Union is currently a member organisation of West London Citizens (WLC). They have committed to a range of actions around social housing, refugee settlement and living wage.

Citizens UK charitable objectives are as follows¹:

- *to develop the capacity and skills of the members of the socially and economically disadvantaged communities of Britain and Ireland in such a way that such members are better able to identify and meet their needs and participate more fully in society;*
- *to assist by directly promoting the more effective working of local and national capacity building institutions designed to pursue that aim.*

Last year, Lucinda Sandon-Allum (Union President) and Jennie Watson (DP Welfare) brought a paper for discussion to Union Council proposing affiliation with CUK². Council agreed to affiliation, with an annual review.

We have met with a WLC's organiser to review the year and discuss possible improvements in the working relationship. These include

- Having a set OT + staff relationship manager/point of contact
 - DPW and Head of Student Voice have been identified
- Training (1 or 2 day) provided to a wider group of student volunteers
 - Liberation Officers and CU committee members identified
- A new lead organiser with experience of working with Student Unions has just joined WLC
- WLC has suggested we plug into a national campaign on sexual violence

The notion of a rebate, especially in light of the unused 6 day training, was mentioned and the organiser agreed to look into it.

Union Notes

1. Current membership cost for Imperial College Union to affiliate with CUK is £5,000 per annum
2. Membership also provides Imperial College Union with a set number of spaces on CUK training (both 2-day and 6-day courses)
3. The uptake for CUK training has been limited

1. Citizens UK, About Us: http://www.citizensuk.org/about_us
2. Imperial College Union Council, 26th February 2016: https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/your-union/how-were-run/committees/15-16/Union_Council/1610

Union Believes

1. The training offered by CUK is not at student-friendly times for our volunteers or Officer Trustees
2. The priorities of Imperial College Union and its members are difficult to align to those of the other West London Citizens member organisations
3. Campaigns attempted this year (including a listening campaign at Hammersmith Hospital Campus) have not succeeded in their aims
4. CUK does not provide value for money to the members of Imperial College Union

Union Resolves

1. Imperial College Union will not re-affiliate unless given a substantial rebate or a future discount in membership fee
2. Union President will negotiate the possibility of an annual membership cost of £3,000 as a starting point alongside the current training provision
3. If a financial deal is reached, the Union will work with CUK to implement the previously identified improvement plan
4. Officer Trustees will explore potential external partner organisations in line with Our Strategy 2017-20

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