



Imperial College Union Board of Trustees Report

Thursday 1st February 2018

AGENDA ITEM NO.	
TITLE	Council Chair Report
AUTHOR	Owen Heaney, Council Chair
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>Council has met 3 times since the last Board meeting, and has discussed several issues which are potentially of interest to the Board, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Beaumont was unanimously ratified as Alumni Trustee • Expired Council policies (including the Publicity and Safe Space policies) have been renewed pending review for the end of the year • There has also been a lot of discussion on the topic of dismissal of officers; I brought a motion of no confidence in a Council member and this raised a lot of discussion points which have been fed into the Governance Review • All 5 Constituent Unions operating on the South Kensington campus have updated their constitutions in preparation for the Leadership Elections • Some small amendments to the Bye-Laws have been adopted (pending Board approval), including minor adjustments to Officer Trustee role descriptions and the formal renaming of out Liberation Officers as such. Council Ordinary Members have also been renamed 'Representatives to Council' • The Union has also been mandated to run a non-partisan campaign in the run-up to the 2018 UK Local Elections encouraging the Union's members to register to vote
PURPOSE	To update the Board on Policy decisions taken by Union Council since the last full meeting
DECISION/ACTION REQUIRED	None

Council Chair Report

Owen Heaney

Since the last meeting of the Board, there have been three Ordinary Meetings of Union Council. These meetings have been highly productive and made some key decisions as well as raising several important topics for discussion, which are detailed below.

7th November

- Council unanimously ratified the appointment of Paul Beaumont as Alumni Trustee.
- A paper was presented which temporarily extended the life of several expired Union Policies, including the Publicity and Safe Space Policies, pending further review before the end of the year. It is hoped that new long-term versions of these Policies will be presented to Council by the end of the year to avoid another situation where the Union has many lapsed Policies.
- An amendment to the Union Awards Policy was also proposed, aiming to improve the openness of the whole process. The paper was passed, although the President was asked to consult outside the meeting on the composition of the Union Awards panel, a process which remains unfinished.

5th December

- Council passed a Policy calling for Union meetings to be conducted in a manner more suitable for members who have neurodivergent conditions. The paper mandates the Union to evaluate the potential for several changes to working practices as regards meetings; these evaluations are yet to take place. The Union is also mandated to ensure that long meetings include opportunities to take a short break and are held whenever possible in rooms free from undue external distractions.
- I, as Chair, brought a Motion of No Confidence against an Ordinary Member of Council for the Faculty of Engineering. I brought the motion as the member in question had potentially benefited from an email sent on his behalf to a large proportion of the Chemical Engineering department during last year's Autumn Elections. As this email was reported after the announcement of results, the standard response to such a breach of election rules could not be taken, leaving the Motion of No Confidence as the only option available under the Bye-Laws. While the motion was defeated, the discussion highlighted several key issues which ought to be considered in the ongoing Governance Review and more generally in our electoral process:
 - The election rules are not read by all candidates, and even when they are read, the format in which they are presented to candidates is far from clear, meaning that many are not aware of the rules on election publicity, etc.
 - The inability of the Union to investigate and take action based on complaints meaning that many are not aware of the rules on election publicity submitted after the announcement of results means that potentially serious breaches could, in particular circumstances, remain uninvestigated. This has potential to undermine confidence in our democracy and potential solutions are to be discussed within the context of the Governance Review.

- In a related matter, a preliminary proposal was made that more junior committees of the Union (such as club Management Groups, Constituent Union committees and the Clubs, Societies and Projects Board) should be given the power to censure and dismiss officers under their remit, with the possibility of appeal to higher bodies. While such a proposal raises potential issues with elected officers being dismissed unfairly, if carefully implemented it could offer a means for ineffective officers to be removed from post without the stress for everyone involved if such a motion is discussed at Council. The paper has not yet been fully discussed, however, with time for the meeting running out at meetings of both Council and CSPB.

9th January

- This meeting was cancelled following a proposal by the President was submitted at the end of the December meeting.

23rd January

- In some of the most productive Council discussion in recent memory, amended constitutions for 5 of our Constituent Unions were ratified by Council in approximately 30 minutes. These changes were primarily made to implement new committee structures within the CUs in time for the upcoming Leadership Elections.
- Changes to the Bye-Laws were adopted based on proposals from the President and Ansh Bhatnagar, Ordinary Member (Faculty of Natural Sciences, Undergraduate):
 - Union Welfare Officers renamed to Liberation and Community Officers
 - Black, Minorities and Ethnic officer renamed Black and Minority Ethnic Officer
 - Campaigns Officer role abolished
 - Several minor amendments to Officer Trustee role descriptions were made, slightly adjusting the distribution of responsibilities between the roles
 - Council Ordinary Members have been renamed 'Representatives to Council'

These proposed changes require ratification by the Board. I have also been mandated to draft a formal role description for the roles and arrange for training to be offered to all incoming Council Members in time for these changes to be actioned in time for the 2018 Autumn Elections.

- A paper was passed unanimously (with the exception of a single abstention) mandating the Union to run a non-partisan campaign encouraging voter registration for the upcoming UK Local Elections, as well as for future elections and referenda.
- Proposals to create a 'Working Class and Social Mobility' Liberation Officer and to require that Council meetings take place in the Union Dining Hall were rejected.

If you have any questions regarding this report or Council business in general, I am happy to answer them at the meeting or via email: chair@ic.ac.uk