



Imperial College Union Communications Committee

24th April 2018

AGENDA ITEM NO.	
TITLE	International and Postgraduate Engagement: what is meant by engagement?
AUTHOR	Lingru (Lynn) Zheng
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This short report summarises attempts made to engage international and postgraduate students from fall 2017 in the hope to understand more about what we meant by engaging our members
PURPOSE	Better understand the needs & wants of international and postgraduate students
DECISION/ACTION REQUIRED	To note the report, discuss its contents, and approve its recommendations

International and Postgraduate Engagement: what is meant by engagement?

Introduction:

According to the definition of the word *engage*, it means participate or become involved in something. Hence to engage international and postgraduate students, we mean to have students participate or become involved in Union, but is there any specific way? How to measure the engagement level? What are the KPIs? A few attempts were made since fall 2017 in the hope of understanding these questions.

Attempt 1: Union on WeChat

A social media that combines the function of Facebook and WhatsApp. Its aim is to engage Asian students and those where the Facebook is banned or not as popular e.g. China, Iran, Cuba and Bangladesh.

Current number of uses: 704.

Discussion points:

- Regarding social media efficiency, should the information be different (facing specific audiences) or the same on different social media?
- Following the previous point, all posts include a translation into Chinese, as this is our major user. Would that appear as unfair to other members using other social media?

Attempt 2: IC DATA CHALLENGE (5th May)

The IC Data Challenge is organised by GSU collaborating with the Data Science Society (ICDSS). The initiative is further supported by the Imperial College Enterprise Lab and Data Science Institute. The event brings together postgraduate students with 7 leading companies to work on real business problems related to data analytics.

Current application: ~100 MSc + ~100 PhD + 33 Undergrads.

Discussion points:

- How can we ensure the activities hold by constituent unions/societies recognised as affiliated to Union? And if we need that at all?
- If engaging postgraduates intellectually is one of Union's mission/value at all? E.g. is intellectual satisfaction a part of wellbeing?

Attempt 3: Membership analysis

By studying existing data on members, it may be possible to ascertain if there is any predictive power between cohorts, students' measurable interactions with the Union, and

voter turnout. A semi-technical document with a proposed approach is prepared by our alumni trustee, meant to “ideally identify traits about voter turnout amongst the Union’s membership that run deeper than high level stratification by UG/PG, EU/non-EU. (Paul Beaumont)”

Current stage: Initial proposal from Paul, passed on to ICDSS (more updates from Andrew?)

Discussion points:

- We need to go deeper from data, but how? The correlations cannot provide a causal relationship, e.g. if there is a strong correlation between the frequency the member uses our advice service and their likelihood to vote. We cannot know which causes which. Furthermore, what should we do about it?

Attempt 4: Bring Happiness to Imperial

An attempted unachieved but was able to have great conversations with Fintan and an alumnus on how to bring to Imperial activities/events that make people happy. Including even lobby the college to add more humanities courses.

Discussion points:

- Can we help/provide tools for trustees to identify and set reasonable goals? (While sometimes a dream looks bright, it is hard to actually implement certain actions to achieve it, e.g. an idea of inviting a noble guest for a speech can easily cost £30k.)

Recommendations:

- Identify the needs & wants of the international and postgraduate students, understand their expectations of the Union and set up guidelines to meet these.
- Help / provide tools for incoming trustees to identify and set targets during their terms.