

Governance & Democracy Review

A note by Alex Chippy Compton, Union President

Background

Imperial College Union prides itself on being a democratic and inclusive organisation, as highlighted by two of our values- Democracy and Inclusivity. Despite great success in our annual elections in March, this democracy is not reflected all year round. During the 2015-16 academic year, Union Council struggled to maintain quoracy and the recent Liberation Review highlighted that many groups are under-represented within the Union's governance structures and find it hard to engage with our processes.

In *Our Strategy 2017-2020*, we placed particular emphasis on working to reach all of our membership. Examining the reach, engagement and effectiveness of our democratic structures will be a valuable exercise and allow us to understand the current successes and shortcomings of our democracy and allow us to realise our strategic goals and values.

In October, Imperial College Union's Constitution & Bye-Laws expire and the Union is constitutionally required to re-examine our governing documents. There has been some recent work examining our democratic structures (ie last year's Officer Trustee Role Review, Liberation Review) and some is ongoing (Wellbeing Rep Network). These will be incorporated into a wider governance review and learnings from these will form part of the recommendations in the wider review.

Current Work

So far, my time has been dedicated to reviewing the work done by Nas and last year's Officer Trustee team for the review. Several papers taken to Union Council last year provide some structure and guidance to the review (*appendix A and B*). Based off these documents and consultation with both Nas Andriopoulos and Andrew Keenan (Head of Student Voice and Communications), I have formulated:

- Proposed membership for the Governance Steering Group
- Terms of Reference for the Steering Group (*appendix D*)
- Potential upper and lower time commitments of the Steering Group
- Out-of-scope issues
- Consultation channels for the review
- Review timeline (*appendix D*)

These are attached for discussion as appendix C.

Next Steps

I believe we are at a stage where the Governance Steering Group can meet to review this work and finalise the scope, core aims and delivery of the review. The Steering Group will then direct and author the review.

With the support of this committee, the above work (and any work resulting from the Steering Group) will be presented to Board of Trustees and Union Council with the renewed timeline.