

Motion on the creation of a Social Mobility Liberation and Community Officer Role

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A related motion has previously been brought to Council's attention. However, recently released UCAS data has highlighted the enormous scale of the social mobility problem at Imperial. It warrants serious further consideration.

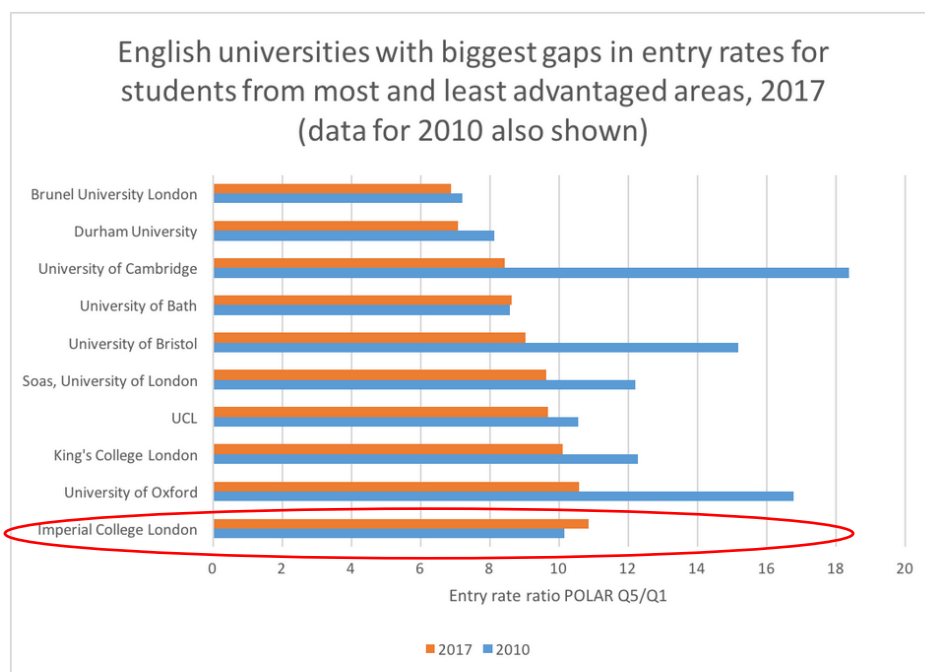
Union Notes:

1. Imperial is now the most unequal UK university in terms of socioeconomic status

1.1 Imperial College is the worst **in the entire UK** for student equality [1]. It has the greatest difference between the numbers of students it admits from affluent and disadvantaged backgrounds [1]

1.2 **11:1** - the ratio of students from affluent areas admitted, to students from disadvantaged areas [1]

2 Many leading institutions have been improving since 2010, but the problem has got worse at Imperial [2]



Source: Ucas

3 Students from less affluent socioeconomic backgrounds face significant challenges at University

3.1 A previous paper [3] provides an appropriate summary of the challenges faced, including:

3.1.1 Students from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to run for positions in elections and take part in clubs and societies. There are likely a number of barriers to entry, such as: money, spare time if working a part-time job etc.

- 3.1.2 A 2014 investigation by the Institute of Fiscal Studies [5] revealed that, compared to students from the lowest socio-economic quintile, students from the highest socio-economic quintile are i) 3.4% less likely to drop out ii) 5.3% more likely to complete their degree iii) 3.7% more likely to graduate with a 1st or 2:1

4 Imperial College Union currently does not have a dedicated Social Mobility Officer to tackle these issues

- 4.1 Liberation and Community Officers were created to represent and campaign for underrepresented students
- 4.2 There is not currently a Liberation Officer dedicated to representing and campaigning for students from less affluent socioeconomic backgrounds

5 Liberation and Community Officers have previously achieved remarkable, tangible successes for the students they represent

- 5.1 Generally, as a cohort they have:
- 5.1.1 Raised awareness of issues, through multiple Felix articles and other publicity channels
 - 5.1.2 Organised numerous events at Imperial, supporting: Black History Month, LGBT History Month, Disabilities Awareness Month
 - 5.1.3 Put crucial issues 'on the agenda'
- 5.2 Examples of specific officer achievements include:
- 5.2.1 Ethics and Environment Officer
 - Successfully led a landmark campaign that resulted in ICU voting to divest its own fund from fossil fuels
 - 5.2.2 LGBT Officer
 - Successfully campaigned for gender neutral toilets where appropriate
 - 5.2.3 Mental Health Liberation Officer
 - Successfully lobbied for Council to be held in a disability accessible venue
 - Working to create a resource of recommended external counselling services
 - Lobbying to ensure student services are adequately expanded to White City
 - Working to allocate financial support to assist students seeking external counselling service
 - Organised an event to support World Mental Health Day at Imperial

Union Believes:

1. The UCAS data shows the huge scale of the social mobility problem at Imperial College
2. This combined with the significant challenges faced by students from less affluent socioeconomic backgrounds means that there is a serious problem
3. A dedicated liberation and community officer, a member of a group that has a track record of tangible success, will help to put these issues on the agenda and begin to tackle them

Union Resolves:

1. To create a Social Mobility Liberation and Community Officer, to be elected in the 2018-19 academic year
2. The role description of this officer shall include all responsibility set out in Sections D21-22 of the ICU (Imperial College Union) Bye-Laws, which apply to all Union Liberation and Community Officers
3. Furthermore, the WCSM Liberation and Community Officer shall:
 - 3.1 Work to raise the awareness and visibility of the lack of social mobility amongst the Imperial College student body
 - 3.2 Liaise with ICU and College to organise outreach programmes in schools from disadvantaged areas
 - 3.3 Work to improve the engagement and representation of students from a diverse range of educational and socioeconomic backgrounds on ICU decision making bodies
 - 3.4 Liaise with relevant College bodies to investigate and eliminate any attainment gaps that exist within the student experience at Imperial
- 4 Amend the ICU Bye-Laws to bring these changes to effect

NB: Amending the ICU Bye-Laws requires a 2/3 majority vote

Sources:

[1] Felix Article, '*Imperial most unequal university in England; Union Council rejects motion for Social Mobility Officer*', available at: <http://felixonline.co.uk/articles/2018-01-26-imperial-most-unequal-university-in-england-union-council-rejects-motion-for-social-mobility-officer/>

[2] Times Higher Education, '*Most privileged outnumber least advantaged 2:1 at most UK HEIs*', available at: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/most-privileged-outnumber-least-advantaged-21-most-uk-heis>

[3] ICU, '*Motion on the Creation of a Working Class and Social Mobility Liberation Officer Role*', available at https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/your-union/how-were-run/committees/17-18/Union_Council/file/4086

[4] Social Mobility Commission, '*State of the Nation report on social mobility in Great Britain*', available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/state-of-the-nation-report-on-social-mobility-in-great-britain>

[5] Institute of Fiscal Studies, '*Socio-economic differences in university outcomes in the UK: drop-out, degree completion and degree class*', available at: <https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/wps/WP201431.pdf>