

Imperial College Union Council Report

Fintan O'Connor, Deputy President (Welfare)

Goals

Wellbeing Strategy

The President, Deputy President (Education) and I have met with the Academic Registrar¹ and the Director of Student Services to discuss the College's policies on Interruptions of Study, which are inadequate, and are being re-written. This included placing emphasis on supporting students at every stage of the process: before, during and after their interruption. We will also be working with Registry to improve students' access to clubs and societies, and the Union, while on interruption. These policies are an important part of the wellbeing strategy, and embedding an emphasis on student welfare at every level in the College.

Sexual violence support policies continue to develop through the Catalyst Fund project, notably with the new staff roles of Sexual Violence Liaison Officers to launch in the coming weeks. The Director of Student Services is leading the project.

Our next steps are to begin to coordinate our work with College, and tie everything we want to achieve together into a coherent strategy. The Director of Student Services is keen to map where we'd like to go, and the Vice-Provost (Education) and Assistant Provost (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) are ready to support our efforts.

Wellbeing Representation Network (WBRN)

The first election cycle to include the WBRN has been a great shared success at the Union, achieving the joint highest ever turnout (27%) and the highest ever absolute number of individual voters (5115). Personally, the Deputy President (Education) and I, as well as the staff team, spoke to over 2500 UG students in lectures during the nominations period to emphasise the importance of our representatives. 75% of WBRN roles were filled, with vacancies to be supported and filled through offline elections where possible.

Their mandatory training has been a priority, with all of the WBRN's training sessions completed within three weeks of their election. Volunteers have responded well, and we will be closely monitoring and supporting their progress throughout the year through scheduled catch-up meetings, regular correspondence and offering additional training. *Look After Your Mate*, a programme from Student Minds on recognising the signs that someone needs support and guiding them to it, will be offered to interested representatives.

We look forward to making sure that the reps are effective in creating change in their communities, but also that they provide the broader evidence base in their work for the Union to use as a powerful tool to advocate for improved student support.

Liberation Review

The BME, Gender Equality, LGBT and Mental Health liberation officers attended a two-hour session with us to prioritise the recommendations of the report into the Union's work on liberation, and set the agenda for the work we do in the coming year.

¹ The Registry is responsible for the administration of all academic matters. It is led by the Academic Registrar. More here: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/registry/>

We have distilled ten recommendations and over seventy sub-recommendations into an action plan designed by our officers, and have generated a bank of questions and issues relating to the work to address with our officers. The priorities these student volunteers have given us are directing our work on the project, and I would like to give them special thanks for their work in guiding us in the project.

While our work has already begun, once the action plan has been refined into a more readable format, it will be publicised alongside the report shortly, promoting the work of the liberation officers and the Union's priorities.

Team Goals

Wellbeing strategy

See above

Year-round democracy

Our work with reps has been making sure that they are supported in making the change they want to see throughout the year, and that students' views on the change that matters to them is represented fairly.

Support & development of volunteers

Training has substantially increased, particularly with the WBRN and the development of what Imperial Plus and our student development team is offering throughout the year. We are evaluating our service, considering significantly increased demand this year.

Accessibility & openness

The liberation officers work (above) has shaped our work and priorities at the Union in a deeper, more meaningful way than ever before.

Operations

Director of the Careers Service

I have been part of the selection process to appoint the new Director of the Careers Service, which will conclude in the coming days.

Gender Equality Officer

The by-election for Gender Equality Officer returned Anna Wilson as our liberation officer for 2017-18. We have been working to bring Anna up to speed with the Union, and support her in making change and advocating for opportunities for women and non-binary students.

Alcohol Awareness and Personal Safety

The Union's bars are working, with support from constituent unions, to reinforce the messages we promote on staying safe while out in London, both at the Union and elsewhere. I am coordinating efforts between the Union and constituent unions, following an initial meeting on 31 October.

Improved messaging and awareness raising to follow in the coming weeks and months.