



Imperial College Union Finance and Risk Committee

Date

AGENDA ITEM NO.	
TITLE	Summer Ball 2018
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	Review of the Imperial College Summer Ball 2018, specifically focusing on the planning process, health and safety, ticket sales, financials, successes and improvements.
PURPOSE	Information update
DECISION/ACTION REQUIRED	None

Summer Ball 2018

Planning

Planning for the Summer Ball 2018 started in January and the first ticket sales went live on Monday 15th January for the 24 hour flash sale. The planning for the Ball was organised by Paul Gallagher (Licensed Trade and Venues Manager) and Jess Harrison (Events and Conferences Manager), with specific sub teams (Entertainments, Bars, Beit Venues and Marketing) helping to coordinate areas of the event.

Health and safety

We paid for a health and safety consultant from Event Safety Plan to oversee the planning process of the ball and review the execution of the event itself. All the risk assessments and method statements in regards to the event are now recorded and contained within one document produced by the consultancy firm, which can be used for the upcoming ball in 2019. Due to our work alongside Event Safety Plan, we can say 2018 was the most compliant ball in regards to health and safety, however, we can always look to improve for next year. The main concerns and improvements outlined from their final report focused predominantly on the Union's use of Dramsoc to build and design stages, control and manage lighting and sound for large stage shows, as well as hiring in equipment from external companies.

Ticket sales

The ball officially sold out a week before the event, 1693 ball tickets in total, 1150 of these included the Union after party. There were strong ticket sales throughout the process, with a slight dip in sales between Early Bird and Final tickets.

We intend to use the same ticket strategy for next year but produce more social media content during the natural "lull" phase between Week 4 and Week 8 to increase ticket sales.

Financials

It was previously agreed for the Summer Ball 2017/18 to have a break even budget at the beginning of the planning process. We ended up with a loss of £949. There were last minute expenditure costs for a lost/stolen bass and a previous sponsorship agreement with Greene King which was incorrectly factored into this year's expenditure. Although 949 is a small loss, the true cost of the Summer Ball is hidden in the time and work dedicated by two full time members of staff planning and organising the ball for six months, as well as the TOIL accrued by Union staff volunteering at the Ball itself.

Successes

Extension of live bands within H Bar was successful and we received no noise complaints.

We had more food options available for students to try at the ball after contracting external food providers in.

This year's initiative to text students with a reminder about the timings for the fireworks was very successful. Alongside reminders on social media and posters, we had a very smooth transition for students leaving the Sherfield building and standing behind the barriers, placed behind the drop zone, with appropriate time to spare before the fireworks started.

A lot of expenditure this year was spent on making the ball compliant in terms of health and safety, with investment in more barriers, SIA and stewards to fulfil this. There were multiple inspections before the event alongside the fire office, SIA teams, security and steward leads, as well as the Event Safety Plan consultants. This meant we had a complete Event Safety Plan and Phase Plan to use on the night, and we followed a specific timeline and procedures document during the evening.

This year we also added new bars to the event, specifically an outdoors Pimms tent and champagne bar within the library café. These bars were another income stream for the ball and an expansion of drinks options for students from previous years, as well as offering competitive rates.

This year we were allowed to use the Business School's computer room, which was a vast improvement for holding the ICU Staff hub.

Improvements

The ball has out grown the Kensington campus in terms of capacity and practicality when running the ball. We're now at the stage where we do not have enough rooms (which are easily accessible) to hold all the performers, student acts and entertainers in. We also had delays in opening the ball due to the build being behind on the night, specifically the Queen's Towers Rooms which required extra help to complete.

We are always looking to strive to improve relations over at Imperial College. Communication issues with University stakeholders have meant that on the night we have struggled with some basic requirements, i.e. power for the external food suppliers, access/locking of rooms and loss of key card access to staff and Dramsoc during the ball. As the event takes place on the weekend, the event itself is not a priority for the College, therefore, miscommunication is common between key stakeholders when passing on information to departments who are affected.

There is currently an over reliance on volunteers and ICU staff working the event to make it function properly. The ball has for a few years been dependent on the good will from staff members within the Union volunteering on the night to help. The ball could not take place without their time and experience.

With the increase in students numbers and exams taking place over the summer, looking at the overall student experience and reflecting upon the 2017/2018 Summer Ball budget and losses, it is time to review other possible options and venues to hold the 2020 Summer Ball.