



Imperial College Union Finance and Risk Committee

30.01.19

AGENDA ITEM NO.	15
TITLE	Summer Ball update
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The Summer Ball is on Saturday the 22nd of June 2019. We aim to deliver a successful ball on time and on budget.</p> <p>This is the initial stage in the planning of the ball, including the first raft of ticket sales that are due to go on sale imminently. The Summer Ball planning chart, outlining key tasks and deadlines that was utilised last year, will be used again this year to ensure we are on track and maintain consistency.</p> <p>We have highlighted a few key risks in the attached paper.</p>
PURPOSE	For information
DECISION/ACTION REQUIRED	None

Ticket sales

There is always the risk that ticket sales will not be as strong as we budget for and therefore, income is lower than planned. We intend to use the same ticket strategy as last year, including a flash sale and staggered ticket prices, which saw a healthy ticket income over the period of January to June. Initial tickets were sold using a 'FOMO' (fear of missing out) strategy; the message being 'once they're gone, they're gone'. A strong Summer Ball campaign, aided by the marketing team and student engagement tactics, utilising the deputy presidents, will also help drive ticket sales.

We expect ticket sales income to be £60k, given the previous 3 balls' income from 15/16, 16/17 and 17/18 has been £60,594, £59,484, and £60,301 respectively. The Early Bird tickets are due to go on sale on Wednesday the 30th of January. This is slightly later than last year, whereby tickets went on sale on the 15th of January. The reason for the slight delay is largely due to ensuring new members of staff are inducted and up to speed with the project (i.e. the newly appointed Summer Ball Project Coordinator to the Commercial Services team, who started on the 16th of January, plus a newly appointed Marketing & Communications Coordinator who joined the Marketing team).

Health and Safety

We have reflected on the recommendations from the Health and Safety consultants we used during the Summer Ball 2018.

Crowd control management, especially at the front entrance to the ball, was highlighted as a possible weak point, as well as the use of Dramsoc to build the technical aspects of the ball (staging, light and sound).

To mitigate issues with crowd control, we intend to organise a wristband collection two days prior to the ball, to alleviate long waiting times for students and overcrowding within the foyer. We are working with Dramsoc to decrease the pressure and technical expectations, previously set at an unrealistic standard for the time and space available, and simplify the staging requirements within the main three entertainment rooms (the Great Hall, QTR and H Bar). Any contractor or student society that is setting up / taking down equipment will be required to submit full risk assessments and method statements prior to work being approved.

To decrease TOIL accrued by Imperial College Union staff volunteering at the ball, we would like to hire agency staff to fulfil the main task of scanning student tickets at the entrance. This should have a direct and positive affect on staff wellbeing as well as being a more cost-effective option overall.

Dramsoc

Dramsoc's participation in the Summer Ball 2019 and whether they would like to continue handling the technical specifications is yet to be confirmed. If Dramsoc would not like to continue volunteering at the ball, the Beit Venues team will consider paying for an external technical company, utilising contacts made with the help of Health and Safety consultants used in the Summer Ball 2018. The use of an external company will come with an additional cost in relation to Dramsoc, but we will build in a contingency cost line to the budget and the simplified staging outlined above

will mean less cost incurred than would have been compared to last year's ball. The budget has yet to be set but we will consider all options carefully before proceeding.

Terrorism

We liaise closely with college security and our external SIA provider to mitigate any risks with regard to external attacks on the night of the Ball. The event lead for the ball has undergone project ARGUS counter-terrorism training, delivered by the City of London Police and their recommendations for safety considerations were implemented into the 2018 ball. The rest of the Beit Venues team, including the Summer Ball Project Coordinator, will be undertaking the Project ARGUS session in May, to expand the overall knowledge of the team and ensure effective and practical steps are put in place to mitigate risks in this area.

Alcohol sales

With statistics claiming that 1 in 5 millennials are non-drinkers, we intend to plan and incorporate more non-alcoholic drinks into the ball and budget to see a decrease in alcohol sales. There is a risk that core drink sales income will be adversely affected with decline in alcohol consumption, given the trend that we have witnessed happening across our bars this financial year, but we intend to offset this with cost savings such as:

- use of agency staff rather than permanent staff claiming TOIL. This cost saving will not be immediately obvious in the Summer Ball budget as permanent staffing costs, both from the Commercial Services team that directly organised and ran the ball and the wider Union staff team that helped on the day, were not reflected at all.
- savings on the fencing due to Imperial Festival incurring some of this cost as they wish to use it directly after the Ball has finished
- Rethinking the area and scope of the Ball given the use of the overall space that we witnessed last year. This could lead to cost savings in terms of set up/take down, staffing and security