

Imperial College Union Council Report

Becky Neil, Deputy President (Welfare)

Introduction

Highlights over the past two months include a disabilities rent subsidy, the first liberation and community officer training day, a drink awareness campaign and running Mums and Dads. [Highlights since the last council include speaking to Senate about Mitigating Circumstances Policy and confirmed increase in counselling service budget.](#)

Report on Progress

I've produced five goals based on my manifesto, what I've found is important to me and the current situations for the university sector. This does not include everything I will be doing for the year but I am open to suggestions and input about anything that I do.

Goal 1 - Reform our Liberation offering to build stronger communities that are listened to.

- Opened a link for students to sign-up to receive updates from Liberation and Community officers, which will form mailing lists for the officers. While this was not initially marketed perfectly the mailing list is greatly appreciated by officers.
- First Liberation and Community officer training day to give the officers skills and knowledge for the year. Still need to personally review the feedback but a massive improvement on previous years where no training was offered.
- Liberation action plan is being produced this week, with steps involved to make the year and planning of what is going on in terms of Union developments more effective. This will be shared with key stakeholders when it is complete.
- Black History Month has some events lined up and currently am working with ACS and BME officer to ensure the remaining budget is used up!
- Producing a list of key staff stakeholders across College who would benefit from involvement with Liberation and Community officers.

Next steps: Develop liberation forums/socials current aim of a launch event of all groups in November for individual networks before Christmas (Up for debate by CWB).

Goal 2 - Audit the Outreach activities run by ICU and Clubs & Socs to understand our Widening Participation Activities.

- This goal exists because the College is under a lot of pressure to increase and develop better widening participation activities. We already have some activities and they are better than what College does. The aim is to investigate what we do, make recommendations for College to improve and potentially look into funding opportunities for our Clubs & Socs that carry out these activities.
- No defined progress as of yet as the timing for Clubs and Socs isn't appropriate.

Next steps: Produce an action plan and timeline for this goal.

Goal 3 - Finalise and implement the Student Support Strategy

- The consultation was increased until 28th September to allow more students and staff to feed into it. I haven't looked properly at the results but the brief overview suggest it's along the right line so will be heading to Provost Board for approval.
- Board has been discussing the role of the Union in this strategy as it is not defined and while not set in stone, the general feeling is that we should take parts that we will do better and just get on with it.

Next steps: I will receive the feedback in the next week.

Goal 4 - Produce a Wellbeing map outlining all wellbeing services across Imperial.

- I've identified the complex nature of the support services available to students in visual form! There needs to be a clearer way for students to know which service to go to and why they should go to a service.
- The services have been outlined with everything they offer different students.
- Leeds SU currently has a good example of an option, in the form of a search engine. Investigated workloads and budget required to use this option. Still looking into other options.

Next steps: Decide the format of the map and speak to services to check their information is correct.

Goal 5 Review the welfare-related work carried out by various volunteers across the organisation.

- Mums and Dads was identified as the first group of volunteers who do not receive enough support. Individuals have agreed to a volunteer statement and taken a quiz when signing up. A platform for Dep Socs to share events was created and individual support for Dep Socs has been given and will continue.
- Hall senior and the relationship that the Union and Halls have has been identified as another issue but no work has yet been started.
- Bar staff have been identified as a stake-holder in welfare. While they are paid staff they are students and at points must work in a welfare capacity.

Next steps: In the process of producing timelines and actions plans for each of these groups.

Operational Achievements

Significant operational tasks I have completed over the summer period are as follows:

- Helped the Disability Advisory Service to implement a scheme which gives students with disabilities who need to live in SK halls a subsidy to cover the difference between a non-SK and a SK hall. This is the first year of the scheme so I am anticipating teething problems but I will be involved in the review.
- Produced a drink awareness campaign around the theme 'Get Home Safe'. This got input from Dep Reps, CUs, LCOs and CSPs. The activities included bottles of water at Show your Colours Events, posters, social media posts, get home safe cards for first years, branded bottle openers and presence at Fresher's Ball and the Postgrad 00s vs 90s. Some CUs ran similar campaigns alongside. This will be evaluated soon.
- Worked with College to purchase assistive technology which could be useful for all students. These can be found in the software hub and on computers across campus.

- Spoke to Senate about the Mitigating Circumstances policy and will be assisting Faculties with the implementation of this and be involved in the review process towards the end of the academic year.
- Involved in interviewing for new counsellors, currently have one new counsellor starting soon with plans to increase this further within the academic year. There is no official plan currently but there are talks about the long term and short term plans regarding counselling and the culture at Imperial.

Items for discussion

This section has been included to allow council to feed into projects and discuss future decisions that the Officer Trustees will make

Item One - Liberation forums/socials

- Our Liberation and Community officers have no platform to speak to their communities to find out what they would like changing or to socialise as a group. The Liberation and Community officers are involved in deciding what would work best. Currently small 'pizza-like' socials and a large event such as a Liberation Masquerade Ball have been suggested. **I will not be taking suggestions from the floor as this was discussed at the last council, but I will still take emails and drop-ins regarding this.**

Item Two The format of the Wellbeing map.

- The support services across Imperial are extremely complicated and difficult to navigate. College is re-making the Student Space as this information hub makes no sense. I would like to produce a map, flow chart or search engine like page that would allow students to be given the service options available to them. **Any suggestions for how this would work best or what type of system you would like to use, please email me or drop by the Union; I will not be taking suggestions from the floor as this was discussed at the last council.**

Closing Comments

Please get in touch with any issues, ideas, problems and solutions. Your input is really important to me. I am available in person and via email for any questions you may have on my report or the Union's work.

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