

# ICSMSU UNION COUNCIL REPORT – OCTOBER 2019



# Imperial College School of Medicine Students' Union

## Committee

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President	Ben Russell
Deputy President	Alistair Ludley
Executive Treasurer	Anchit Chandran
Secretary and Communications Officer	Zoha Imam
BMB President	Veronika Suchankova
Entertainments Chair	Nicole George
Social Secretary	Tom Hess
RAG Chair	Kimberley Nyamakope
Academic Chair	Waseem Hasan
Academic Officer – Early Years	Rob Grogan
Academic Officer – BSc Year	Anita Bolina
Academic Officer – Clinical Years	Aditi Reddy
Academic Officer – BMB	Nayana Iyer
Welfare Chair	Jack Hall
Vice Chair for Wellbeing Representatives	Natania Varshney
Vice Chair for Campaigns	Adrija Bhattacharyya
Clubs & Societies Chair	Rishabh Hariharan
Management Group Treasurer	Zhin Tan
Vice Chair for Sports & Arts	Chris Oldfield
Vice Chair for Volunteering & Academics	Conor Wisentaner

## Overview

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ICSMSU have had a very busy few months since we first got together in June/July.

We have hosted many days for students and members of the Students' Union (SU) since then and the team have bonded very well. Some highlights of events include: a training day for all SU members, an SU Dinner held in September, and Freshers' Fortnight over the first two weeks of October.

During the training day, we focussed on individual skills which will aid officers this year, as well as individual and team goal planning.

We have been working with the Faculty of Medicine on the New Curriculum, which has just come into effect for the first years. We have been shaping its development and implementation, and were also a lot more involved in the introductory two weeks than we have been before. The Academic team are now focussing on feedback for the

curriculum and managing expectations/concerns.

The fifth and final years have been supported academically and in welfare, since their course started in June.

The Welfare team have been getting their rep network together, building relationships with faculty and planning their year of campaigns and objectives.

The Management Group team have held meetings with the Clubs and Societies (C&S), hosted one-to-ones with every C&S and have begun to implement changes to their support structures for committees.

The BSc in Medical Biosciences (BMB) team have had successes continuing the work from last year about industry placements, and further course changes being introduced in response to their feedback.

The team have bonded very well together and we had a very successful Freshers' Fortnight.

Compared to 2018-19, we have maintained the structure which was introduced, and the newer roles are becoming more defined, with each of them gaining responsibilities which are relevant to their roles. We are working on the feedback from last year to make these positions the most efficient and relevant they can be, which will affect the whole SU.

We are also maintaining the meeting structure of 'Exec Meetings' and 'SU Meetings'.

We have held three formal entire-SU meetings so far this year: a pre-holiday meeting, a pre-freshers meeting and a Freshers debrief. This is in addition to many team meetings and informal SU meetings which have been called around events and about specific things.

We are using the same financial model as was agreed last year, but we will be applying for a higher amount of Faculty funding. In addition, our contributions from the Alumni Association will be increasing in line with what has been agreed, and we are hoping to achieve a

larger amount of sponsorship, including for individual events which should take some of the burden off students.

Some of the major challenges so far have been: the Curriculum Review, the sale of the St Mary's Medical School Building, and high Faculty National Student Survey (NSS) score but low "Student Union" score.

Since a Curriculum Review has taken place and is being implemented, we are looking to do an entire review of our services in this same year. This will cover the whole School of Medicine and all our teams to see what services we are offering well, and what we could improve, with a view to producing a long-term plan.

This is in line with many other consultations taking place this year in the Faculty of Medicine (one, for example, also regarding the sale of the St Mary's site), and we will be working closely with the staff to see all these things through.

## Entertainments

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### Freshers' Fortnight

This is our biggest Ents undertaking of the year. Building on last year's success with inclusivity, we continued to make improvements to our events.

- ✓ New boat for boat party with more space and rain cover for non-drinking
- ✓ Continued development of 'The Endgames' shifting focus away from alcohol and with more high-quality stalls, and more food offerings
- ✓ Film night alongside our 'First Sports Night' was run in conjunction with Muslim Medics, and we have begun working on a partnership for many more events throughout the year
- ✓ Reynolds Show was made completely non-drinker friendly, and many non-drinkers said they enjoyed the new challenges

Compared to last year's report, attendance was much higher at 'The Endgames' and we have heard very good feedback regarding the event.

The running of our events was very smooth with minimal incidents (a small number are always expected and unavoidable) and a very cohesive team headed up by our Entertainments Chair Nicole George, working very closely with Social Secretary Tom Hess.

Trialling new events and new structures to pre-existing events is always a brave feat and I think it was done with extreme professionalism and great success.

### Moving Forward

The Ents Team do not get much of a break this term – with Halloween week and Christmas week coming up this term, including one of our largest staple events (Snow Ball) there will undoubtedly be even more work coming up for the Ents team to stick their teeth into!

They have exciting plans for the year including expanding the Mums & Dads scheme, introducing a partnership with Muslim Medics and more joint events, and working with the Management Group team to produce a 're-freshers' in Term 2.

## RAG

RAG put on another successful RAG day despite poor weather, and they updated the event to suit feedback from previous years. Turnout was higher than last year, which was only soured slightly by a problem caused by the afterparty club.

There are some unique ideas for the year and for our RAG week in Jan/Feb which we look forward to raising tens of thousands of pounds as in previous years, for our 2019-20 charities chosen by the RAG Committee and ICSM Students: Hammersmith & Fulham Foodbank and Schistosomiasis Control Initiative.

## Academics

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The New MBBS Curriculum was launched in September 2019 and all new students have begun studying Phase One, with new fourth years beginning Phase Two. It is having some teething problems, but the academic team are working tirelessly with the Faculty to sort those out.

The Academic Chair, Waseem, has been interested in efforts to update or repurpose the SOLE feedback system and that is one of our goals this year. The College policy has been lifted for evaluating the new Phase One, so we want to influence how this affects the rest of the course feedback.

## Early Years

First and second years started at the beginning of October along with the rest of Imperial.

The first years have just started on the New Curriculum and have required a lot of support from our team and the faculty. They are (unofficially) unsure about the content, the new style of learning and the progress that has been made in preparing the course – some more extensive feedback will be gathered once we have reps elected into the positions. Some issues have come up with the use of Notebank, but the Academic team have worked quickly to rectify these. The Academic team is planning an interim feedback and engagement session this Wednesday to calm some of the worries. Their continual contact with key faculty

members has been instrumental in designing and altering the new course, and we look forward to this continuing for the entire year.

The second years have had their introductory talks from our teams and seem to be settling into the new content well. First Early Years Student Staff Liaison Group (SSLG) has not happened yet but the reps have just been elected and will begin to collate feedback immediately.

### Clinical Years

Years five and six have been on firms (placement) since June, and year 3 joined them in September. The Clinical Officer and rest of the team started working immediately to get reps elected and feedback collected. We have held our first Clinical SSLG and a few forums already, where the staff have noted our issues.

The mock resits for PACES (one of the clinical exams) was organised almost immediately in May/June and was a success, preparing resit students for their exams. This is the first time this has been run, following on from the new mock PACES exam a month or so earlier, also organised

by the Academic team in conjunction with some academic societies.

### BSc Year

BSc Year also starts earlier than College term dates, so the Academic Officer has been working hard to support them. We hosted a very successful welcome mingle for all external intercalators and had around ten times the number of students turn up than in previous years. They said that the support we have offered before they joined was valuable, but it was brought up at SSLG that it could be even further enhanced for the rest of the year to do with SU events.

Since Year 4 has also begun the New Curriculum (Phase Two), there many changes which the Academic team and reps will also have to deal with. Despite this, feedback was largely positive at the last SSLG and there were a few minor points, which have been addressed by faculty.

Teaching skills sessions, which were one of the aims of the Academic Officer, have been introduced and feedback is already being gathered on their effectiveness.

## Welfare

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The Welfare team have been working hard to get their plans sorted for the rest of the year. The new structure is working well, with an incredibly successful campaign having already been run this year and reps also taken care of.

One of the key projects for the Welfare team before College term started was the Mums and Dads scheme – they spent much time perfecting the system of doing pairings and we believe the freshers will get much more relevant support in future because of this. The Chair plans to write comprehensive guidance on this process for the future, so it will run much more smoothly in the future.

Black History Month was a great success and has had engagement and much positive feedback from across ICSM. Although the College and Union ran their own campaign, we feel it was very important that students got to see figures in their own community speaking out and hear supportive and inspiring

messages from their actual ICSM colleagues.

### Future Goals

Some other key things the team are hoping to focus on this year include:

- ✓ Relaunching some old campaigns as well as continuing current ones
- ✓ Revamping and advertising counselling services, and getting them more engrained at Charing Cross (CX)
- ✓ Tying in with the faculty to develop an exciting 'Welfare Hub' at CX in line with the new developments and Faculty Vision
- ✓ The provision of personal safety alarms, contraception and feminine hygiene products both to ICSM (across all campuses) and the local community.



## Management Group

The new structure is becoming more formalised and the officers this year have already been able to build on the successes of their predecessors, such as working on the faculty careers fair with volunteering and academic societies.

More of the admin tasks have been allocated to specific people and they are managing their time very efficiently. The Management Group (MG) Treasurer is spending a lot of time with finance queries and supporting clubs and societies with their applications and running.

Many further improvements were made to 'The Endgames' during Freshers' Fortnight, including more food and more live band equipment and content. This continued to create a relaxed atmosphere open to all and portrayed the C&S in a very positive light.

### Club and Society Support

We have completed one-to-one meetings with every club and society under our MG to talk about their

year, their goals, and general updates and problem spotting.

A new Instagram account has been started (ICSM Clubs & Socs) which is designed to give updates on what's going on in our community with fixtures, results, shows and events. The team have also begun 'ICSM Society Stories' which is aimed at bringing more people into C&S specifically after their first year. They have a bank of stories and photos to post and have very successfully begun to run the campaign.

This links into one of our plans for the future, which is to host a 're-freshers' event in term two, to re-enthuse people about the Mums & Dads scheme, their current C&S, and make C&S more approachable to join post freshers.

The vice chairs have also completed lots of planning for their respective Sports & Arts and Volunteering & Academics Dinners which will take place in term two. V&A dinner is a new addition to the calendar, and something which has been discussed with society chairs who were very

much in support of a recognition dinner.

Some progress has been made on the C&S storage in CX; we have installed the first shelving units and just need confirmation of funding from the Union before buying the rest of the shelving on their behalf, since this was not completed by the Activities team. This is still linking into student complaints about storage and use of the microwaves, which are currently inaccessible.

## Exec

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The Exec team in ICSM refers to those not in other teams, whose key responsibility is the running of the SU itself.

### Deputy President

The Deputy has achieved some fantastic things already in their self-designed role to support all other officers directly. He and the President have held one-to-ones with every officer to discuss their goals and how we can support them and hosted a training day for every officer. He has also made an

inventory of stash, organised the shop and helped out doing many jobs for freshers fortnight which did not sit with somebody specific.

### Secretary & Communications

The Sec & Comms Officer has made great progress with revamping the newsletter to make it more accessible, working out how to access the website and update all the old content on there, and updating all social media.

### Exec Treasurer

The Treasurer has already secured around £3,000 of sponsorship for this year and hosted the 'Inspirational Afternoon' with sponsors, useful companies for medical students and doctors.

### BMB President

The BMB team have been working with faculty on integrating BMB more closely with ICSM and improving their careers support, which they have begun organising already. There have been problems with placements and ICA deadlines, which the team are working to sort out.

## President

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After a very busy Summer of firefighting and planning Freshers' Fortnight, I will soon begin planning my concrete goals for the year and the strategic direction of the SU, but there are many ideas which have already begun to be introduced by myself and the various teams which are most involved with them.

### Student Consultation

One of our key priorities will be around student consultation. This involves working actively with the faculty to ensure that students are adequately listened to for any changes which will affect them in the future – a culture change which has already started for decisions made very recently.

This is particularly relevant to the sale of the St Mary's Medical School Building, where we are pushing for much active involvement of students in decisions about where the money is spent. The decision itself cannot be overturned, but we believe that this could be a very positive step for the Medical School and could improve the student experience by a

large amount, if conducted in the correct way. An engagement and consultation plan has been devised within our student/staff working group, and the SU have had much influence over the manner of consultation which we are currently satisfied with.

We are looking to do a large consultation piece within the School of Medicine about the services we as an SU offer, as we believe our representation could always be improved. This will be done with surveys, stalls, focus groups, clubs and societies and drop-ins in order to reach the most representative selection of the School possible.

This is with a larger view to produce a three-year plan and set the strategic direction of the SU. I am looking to produce this at the end of the year, with all the feedback and hindsight we have.

### Academics

Another priority will be around improving the academic experience for all students. The specific things we will be working on are around replacing SOLE for medics and

biomeds with a more appropriate form of feedback system. This has been agreed for Phase One of the New Curriculum, but I am looking to work on this further to expand to the rest of the years. A new job has been introduced within the faculty purely to evaluate teaching, so I plan to work closely with them on gathering ideas.

From student feedback, careers support could be massively improved, and we have already begun this. The Volunteering & Academic Officer has begun including student societies into the careers fair, and we are negotiating having more non-medicine stalls and talks at the events. This is also a priority for BMB, who currently feel very under-supported in career decisions. The BMB President has been in discussions with faculty about how to begin this support, and it has been raised at Undergraduate Board for further discussion.


### [Transparency and Accessibility](#)

We are planning to continue some of the work done last year to improve transparency around the SU. It is hoped that the consultation of the

whole Medical School will begin to open our doors to more people and let them have a say in how we and the School are run best for them.

We are also trying to be a lot more active on social media and using a wider variety of media to contact people. We are publishing more of exactly what we are up to, and this will continue over the year to hopefully improve understanding of all the meetings and important decisions we are involved in, and that students can influence. We will also be a lot more public with meetings we run, by making SSLGs public forums and publishing minutes and regular updates from SU meetings, meetings with faculty and directing people to Union notes.

We sincerely believe that this will increase engagement and satisfaction among the student body with us, the Union and the university, and lead to a much better overall experience for all students at ICSM.



**THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR FANTASTIC  
VOLUNTEERS. YOU REGULARLY GO ABOVE  
AND BEYOND TO FAR EXCEED THE  
EXPECTED DUTIES OF A VOLUNTEER, AND  
EVERYONE IS VERY GRATEFUL THAT YOU  
ALL WORK TIRELESSLY TO IMPROVE THE  
STUDENT EXPERIENCE OF ALL THOSE  
WITHIN OUR ICSM COMMUNITY.**

