



Felix

– Keep the Cat Free –

IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON UNION COUNCIL REPORT
18TH FEBRUARY 2020

END OF FIRST TERM

The first term of this year was a very successful one for *Felix*. The paper averaged over 48 pages, with the inclusion of the largest issue ever at 96 pages for the 70th anniversary (the maximum for the printers to even produce for us!) This blew our 72-page aim out of the water, and the student editorial team deserves huge credit for pulling it off in only 8 days.

Feedback has been broadly positive, with readers appreciating the amount and quality of content produced. Very few papers remain around campus at the end of each week, meaning pickup is high. There are still many core areas for improvement, detailed in following sections.

IT AND COPYRIGHT ISSUES: WEBSITE

The website for *Felix* is one of the core problem areas to address. Although the website is finally technically functional – meaning it has now been updated with articles from first term – the process is laborious and problematic due to ongoing background issues. [For those with technical knowhow, the only way to upload an article, author, or anything else is to write a raw Github file using markdown, with any single mistake rendering the Github commit (and any subsequent ones) invalid, resulting in additional labour for ‘troubleshooting’.]

Articles from this term so far should follow soon (expected over the next week or so).

The establishment of a team of student webmasters is ongoing, and website handover documentation and a system for proper maintenance should be ready for the next year of *Felix*. The Editor believes this will be a significant contribution to ensuring sustainable practices moving forward.

One of the core problems with the website is with copyright. We received a copyright strike in December due to an image uploaded by a predecessor. This was dealt with promptly with support from the Union; however, it raised concerns with how images are used and attributed on the website specifically. As a result, all images have currently been culled from the website. We are currently assessing how to proceed, both by establishing new failsafes and checks in our processes to ensure no problems in future, and to figure out which images on the website can be reinstated.

An unfortunate side effect of this has been that the issue archive is currently inaccessible. We’re hoping that this should be available within the next week, by digging through the site’s code and making appropriate changes

to ensure the issue PDFs are accessible without also reinstating all the images.

IT ISSUES: OFFICE

The office's IT issues have seen little improvement since the last report. We still have multiple broken Macs that need replacement; the Arts and Ents Chair is working on getting these replaced, as the holdup is on the supplier side. Additionally, multiple keyboards have broken down or developed faults under heavy usage; these are hopefully to be replaced soon (I believe they have been ordered as of the time of writing). As a result, we are down to four usable Macs in the office itself for editing, creating bottlenecks in our workflow that need to be remedied – as the expected number is seven.)

EDITORIAL TEAM

The editorial team has approximately stabilised after a period of rapid growth last term, as detailed in the previous report. Editors are now trained and broadly confident in their roles. Several sections have begun recruitment for next year, ensuring handover goes smoothly and there are trained editors prepared for the next Editor upon entering office.

NEW CONTENT

Our new content from last term (A Conversation With, Constituent Union, Throwback, and TV) have been running fairly regularly and successfully. These are significant contributors every week, giving voice to the Union/Constituent Unions within *Felix*, or contributing to the cultural breadth of the paper.

The Postgraduate section has not been publishing regularly; we will be liaising with the GSU about how to ensure this section gets back up-and-running. Postgraduate outreach is an issue the Union as a whole faces, including *Felix*, which should be remedied.

We have additionally introduced a Fashion section this term, which has been absent since 2012 and has already been well-produced with engaging content.

Our News content has covered most major stories at the College, including extensive coverage of topics such as the rent renegotiations. We are experimenting with bringing more editors from the team into News, allowing for greater breadth of coverage beyond just 'major stories'.

TWO-WEEK EDITORIAL CYCLE AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

This manifesto aim will likely not be introduced this year. There are other areas to address first as a core priority (e.g. the website), and the editorial team expressed a preference for maintaining the current system, as the extra organisational load of a two-week cycle would be difficult to manage around degrees.

To address this concern, the Editor is looking to introduce project management software to *Felix* via e.g. Monday or Trello.com. Some sections within *Felix* have been trialing usage of these web applications during the first term, with success. Relieving organisational workload from the student team should make the experience of being in *Felix* more enjoyable, less stressful, and should free up time to focus purely on content.

HANDOVER PREPARATION

The Editor has continued to make changes to the handover documentation prepared by Fred Fyles in 2017-18, updating where required and adding his own expertise. Additionally, informal training has begun internally to *Felix* for anybody who wishes to take up the Editor or Deputy Editor roles at any point in the future. This will evolve into a 'shadowing' week at a time that works for students, where they dedicate a significant portion of their week to shadowing the Editor and learning fully how the paper is produced,

the team is recruited and put together, and so on. This will be duplicated if necessary for the winner of the LE20 Editor position, prior to the official handover in July.

FELIX AS A SOCIETY

Felix has continued to thrive as a society, although this has fallen through in the last

few weeks due to exam stress and the subsequent scramble to get back on track afterwards. The Editor hopes that the team will continue to bond and will carry those through to next year, leaving a strong base for successors to build on.

