

President Report to Union Council – May 2020

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Highlights:

- COVID-19 Planning/Mitigation
- Appointment of a new MD
- Union Financial Planning

College Meetings & Prep	Student + Union Meetings & Prep	Operational work (day-to-day)	Project work (major goals)	Misc (largely MD recruitment)
10.6%	38.6%	20.6%	4.2%	25.9%

Updates:

- **College COVID-19 Planning.** We have been involved in a range of conversations with the College regarding COVID-19.
 - **Internal Planning.** Two major committees have been set up to make decisions around COVID-19, a “gold” group consisting of the College President, the Provost and the Chief Financial Officer, and a “silver group” with those members as well as other key staff from around the College. The gold group sets the overall direction and has oversight, while the silver group makes more of the day to day decisions. Early on in the crisis, we asked for a Union seat on that committee, on the grounds that students ought to have a say in major operational decisions at the College, and that our involvement might help the College “get things right” on this. While our requests were rebuffed, we have been involved in two of the silver “subgroups” with specific remits.
 - **Education Group** – looking at changes being made to education this year because of the crisis e.g. the safety net policy. Ashley, Shervin, and I attend these meetings.
 - **Student Recruitment Strategy Group (SRSB)** – Planning for the next academic year. Shervin attends these meetings.
 - **College Council etc.** Senior leaders in the College are updating the College Council roughly once every 3 weeks – I’m happy to take any questions about these meetings although little of what has been discussed here is of direct relevance to students.
 - **Student Experience.** Through some careful interventions in meetings and work with more supportive members of staff, we are working to ensure the experience of students (in particular beyond the classroom) is being thought about. We want the College to make plans holistically rather than setting aside questions around the experience of students until after all the “real” decisions have been made.
- **Union COVID-19 Update.**
 - Much of the Union’s work is continuing, with far more planned meetings and scheduled social calls than normal necessitated by the crisis.
 - We have **furloughed** 18 members of staff in the commercial team, in order to protect their jobs while regular business is interrupted. We are covering the 20% of the salaries of these staff that the government scheme misses.
 - Our bid for a new **block grant** was submitted at the start of April, requesting our regular funding + an inflationary uplift, as well as funding for several one-off projects. The crisis meant that the normal financial planning round was cancelled, and the CFO has told us we’ll hear back in a few weeks’ time.

- In the meantime, **financial planning for 2020-21** is continuing as normal, although we may have to amend the final figures depending on the outcome of any conversations around the block grant. In this process, we are considering a range of possible scenarios, ranging from business-as-usual to a vastly reduced on-campus presence next year. As part of this process, we have begun costing different proposals for the implementation of the London Living Wage (*see paper*).
- **Managing Director Appointment.** We have held an extensive and thorough process over recent weeks to appoint a new MD, including two rounds of interviews, a written exercise, a finance test and meetings with student leaders and staff managers. We have made an appointment verbally, and I will be able to share more once things are confirmed in writing. Thank you to everyone who helped out!
- **Staff Restructure.** Since the appointment of our interim MD in January, we have carried out a staff restructure. The aim of this process was to make ICU a more effective organisation for our membership. The main changes are that the Representation Team has moved to Student Experience, alongside Activities & Development, which now share a manager. I'm happy to take any questions on this.

Upcoming:

- We have begun tracking our work more formally to keep staff motivated and productive during the crisis. The OTs have each written up a small number of key things we'd like to get done in the coming weeks, the details of which we'd be happy to share with Council.
- Nominations for the [Student Choice Awards](#), recognising great student volunteers and staff, have opened. Nominations close on March 18th -- nominate someone!
- Work has begun on the induction process for next years' full-time officers.

Congratulations to everyone who was elected in the Leadership Elections: in particular Ross, Sam, and Michaela, who will be joining Shervin and myself in a few months' time!

Key goals:

College Goal: Change the way decisions are made – In progress

- One of my objectives for the coming weeks is to produce a document detailing our relationships with individuals and committees of the College, which will help identify where we need to increase the influence of students.

Union Goal 1: Transparency – In progress

- We've written a plan for OT communications, committing ourselves to:
 - More frequent posts on social media
 - An interview series in *Felix*
 - ~~“OT Tours” across our campuses~~
 - Our blogs/written articles for more detailed stuff

Union Goal 2: Protecting/Improving our Services – Frozen in the short-term due to COVID-19

- Some work is happening in this area regarding (for example) planning around Welcome 2020, but its all in the context of much broader planning and the obvious uncertainty created by the Crisis.

Union Goal 3: London Living Wage – In progress

- *See paper*