



Felix

– Keep the Cat Free –

IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON UNION COUNCIL REPORT
9TH JUNE 2020

END OF SECOND TERM

The second term of the year was generally a success for *Felix*. While we didn't quite top our page-average for first term, we still successfully delivered as-much-if-not-more content than any other term in *Felix's* history. Pickup remained high around campus.

Ideas for other "featured issues" like the 70th Anniversary issue were planned, but ended up being deferred to third term based on feedback from the editorial team. Naturally, due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation, many of these ideas will have to be delayed further.

The biggest failure of second term was the lack of an online website-based presence for *Felix*. The COVID situation made fixing this an even bigger priority than it already was; see below.

WEBSITE: TEMPORARY, OLD, AND NEW

The *Felix* website, as detailed in previous Council reports, has suffered from a complete lack of any technical documentation or maintenance since its inception in Summer 2017. This has led to features breaking, and made updating the website either impossible or an extreme time-sink for the Editor-in-Chief whenever it was available.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced rapid action. In the short-term, we have established

ourselves at a new temporary site using Squarespace, built and run by the Editor - felixonlinesummer.uk. Along with this, an entirely-online workflow was constructed.

In the long-term, we plan to use the remaining print budget from this year to hire an external agency to create a new *Felix* website, and possibly to maintain it in future. Support for this is being provided by the Systems and Comms teams at the Union. Progress in this final area has been delayed by the more pressing issues of ensuring content flow for the current term, but we are optimistic moving forward.

While things are a little shaky currently, we believe these changes needed to happen anyway and that this will have substantial long-term benefits for *Felix* by strengthening our online presence and offering a more sustainable back-end and overall workflow. The options this will open up for future Editors and editorial teams will make a big difference, and should mean we are more prepared in future for unexpected situations.

STUDENT WELLBEING AND CONTENT

It is not a secret that the new temporary *Felix* website has been short on content, and it is worth addressing here.

Content often drops off in Summer as students struggle to keep up with commitments to *Felix* and their exams. Even in a normal year, combining that with the loss of content from moving online (centrefolds, ad pages, front cover, Throwback, etc.) would prove damaging to our overall output.

However, the situation has obviously been exacerbated by the ongoing pandemic. With the stress of online exams, timezone differences, and caring for loved ones, students have struggled to produce content - both on the editorial team and our regular writers. I, as Editor, have personally been uncomfortable with pressuring students further to produce, given that as a Union organisation our primary concern should be student wellbeing, and have been seeking alternative options for increasing our content flow for the rest of this year (see next section.)

In terms of my personal content work as Editor, predominantly News, this has been hampered by two factors. Firstly, the lack of events and activity on campus means that sourcing information and stories, securing interviews, and so on is much more challenging. Secondly, I have been trying to 'plug the gaps' and 'firefight' out of the current situation. Building and maintaining the new website, setting up content flows for other sections, exploring recruitment options, copyediting and copyright-checking all but two of the articles on the website thus far, and so on have eaten the vast majority of my time. We currently have several News articles in the works and hope to return to regular service

very shortly, but ask for patience in the meantime.

EDITORIAL TEAM RECRUITMENT

After stabilisation last term, this term we have been faced by a need to once again expand - even if temporarily. Although the editorial team is currently very large compared to previous years, the current situation has clearly taken its toll. We've been making social media recruitment drives, and contacting key people to spread the word to target areas (e.g. asking the Silwood Chair to advertise for a Sustainability Editor). While these have seen some success, the ongoing situation is obviously making students reluctant to take on even more voluntary commitments.

On the positive side, we have had prospective/incoming students pre-emptively contact and write for us already due to these drives. This shows a lot of promise for next year, and for the potential outreach of our new systems.

We hope that as exams wrap up, we can fill the necessary positions more easily and make a strong push to the end of the year.

AGM

We will be holding our AGM on Friday 12th to select the *Felix* committee members for next year.

HANDOVER PREPARATION

The Editor has, unfortunately, lost access to the handover document he was editing for preparation for the incoming officer - which was located in the *Felix* office in South Kensington. However, the incoming Editor has experienced a lot of the *Felix* process throughout the year due to their interest in running for the role, and so the current Editor feels confident that - however handover and training proceeds - they will be prepared for next September.
