

**Imperial College Union
Board of Trustees / 28 October 2020**

Officer Trustee Update & Objectives

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Purpose: To report on the work of the Officer Trustees and update Board on the agreed formal objectives for 2020/21.

1. Updates

a. Internal matters

- i. Union elections (ALL)
The Autumn elections are currently taking place for a slew of (mostly representative) student volunteer roles. The officers have had some involvement in planning and supporting these, although key decisions rest with Tom² as DRO and RO.
- ii. CSP Support (DPCS/DPFS)
This has included routine and recurring matters, such as resolving individual queries and signing sponsorship contracts, as well specific matters resulting from COVID, such as the development of a new risk assessment process (and consequent work processing club risk assessments). The team (Ross in particular) have also been proactively communicating with CSP committee members as guidance changes.
- iii. CSP funding model (DPCS)
Work to realise an upfront reduction on CSP grant is ongoing. Ross is working, in consultation with senior volunteers, on a principled basis for reaching a ~25% (~£100,000) reduction in CSP grant, minimising the adverse effect on club activity.
- iv. Commercial activity (ALL/DPFS)
This work has been twofold. Firstly, all officers, but especially the DPW and DPFS, have supported the commercial operation at least once to relieve the burden on other staff and help manage the flow of people into the building. More generally, the DPFS has been supporting the implementation of an app for table service in the bars, which should help deliver orders more efficiently and more safely.
- v. Volunteer training (DPE/DPW/DPCS)
Training for key volunteers has been ongoing, for senior reps and CSP volunteers. Training for members of Union Council and newly elected student reps is upcoming.
- vi. Imperial athletes (DPCS)
The 'sports hub' finally launched for all of our 80+ sports clubs under the name 'Imperial Athletes'. This is a joint venture between Move Imperial and the Union to create a 'one stop shop' for sport and enable us to support clubs better, whilst increasing accessibility and inclusivity. This includes the launch of 7 intramural leagues that started w/c 19th October. Staff furlough over the summer means some of the work to support clubs under this new structure is still taking place, under Ross' direction.

- vii. Student Disciplinary matters (DPW/PRES/DPCS)
As well as advising the College on appropriate disciplinary methods to use in light of COVID, we have been working to review our existing disciplinary & complaints procedure, as well as managing a small number of individual cases. Shervin may provide more detail verbally.
- viii. Communications to students (ALL/DPW)
So far, we've written a blog and a couple of all-student emails about specific matters, on top of communications to volunteers. Shervin has also produced a comms plan for the Officer Team (see separate paper) which was signed off at Leadership on October 13th.
- ix. Building Liberation & Community Networks (DPW)
Our new Liberation & Community Networks have been officially launched as of the start of term and, as of the Board meeting, students have been elected into positions on these new committees. The networks need further development in terms of model of support, systems set-up and governance.
- x. Student Casework and Disciplinary (DPW/DPCS)
Since term started, there have been numerous of student casework and disciplinary matters to attend to. Most of these have revolved around misconduct in clubs – both in terms of breaking new COVID regulations but also around harassment/bullying.

b. Representation to the College

- i. Education meetings (DPW/DPE/PRES)
ESOG, and related meetings with different acronyms, have persisted, although the frequency has lessened somewhat. We're still actively participating in College decisions on education and the wider student experience where we can, although in some cases decisions have already been made before they reach any of the fora in which we're involved. One of our key next steps is to
- ii. NSS (DPE/PRES)
The "Flegrova" approach to the NSS was endorsed unanimously by Provost's Board. We will now begin collaborating with individual staff members in order to action specific recommendations.
- iii. PGT application fees (DPW/DPE/PRES)
Without much advanced warning, the College took the step of introducing an application fee for taught postgraduate courses. There has been a significant backlash to this from students, staff, and alumni. We discuss it more [here](#).
- iv. International fees (PRES/DPW)
There is also some pressure from international students to pursue fee reductions in light of the COVID-modified teaching offer this year, and the extremely high fees international students pay. Shervin and I have been supporting the international officer with this – aiming to keep the College honest while also keeping the dialogue constructive.
- v. Socially responsible investment (PRES/DPFS)
Following the paper I brought to College Council last November, and the outcome of the process it led to, work has recommenced on socially responsible investment (SRI) within the College. There is now an SRI 'engagement' group on which I will sit, tasked with considering how firms in which the College is invested respond to pressures to change their behaviour. I will be

supported in this endeavour by other elected officers of the Union (including Sam, and the Ethics & Environment officer).

vi. Planning for graduation (PRES)

Following a student backlash and a few careful conversations thereafter, a joint student-staff committee has been started to oversee graduation. The student members are the GSU president, the ICSMSU president, and me. Filming for the online 'graduation celebration' is upcoming.

c. Other matters

i. Paragon hall move

[As you may have seen](#) – a West London hall we were using this year due to higher-than-expected student numbers is being shut due to concerns related to cladding. The Imperial students are being given £50 each, a month's travelcard, and lodgings in an (arguably nicer) Islington hall. We were informed of this by Jane Neary in advance of the story dropping.

d. Objective-setting

We have been going through a process of setting officer objectives, against which all OTs will report. A summary of these objectives comprises the section that follows. It should be noted that there is considerable overlap in these aims, especially between the DPCS and DPFS, and that some of the work described below is encapsulated in other papers (e.g. TB/20-21/17 that sets out the development of a new strategy).

2. Summary of Officer objectives

a. President

i. Working to ensure all relevant stakeholders are properly involved when the College makes decisions

1. Lobbying the College for involvement in decisions beyond just education
2. Pressuring the College to include students on committees currently being formed as a result of current (and upcoming) College governance review(s)
3. Communicating clearly to students about the importance of this issue and any progress made – to make it clear we ‘have their backs’
4. Improving our representation function internally to facilitate this.
5. Supporting DPE/DPW to build relationships with student reps
6. Helping reconstruct staff support function with the recruitment of a new manager and a realignment of that team’s priorities
7. Ensuring this point is included in the Union’s strategy (“front and centre”)

ii. Setting a stable trajectory for the Union post-2021 (2021-23)

1. Strategy

We set a clear trajectory for the future, particularly by producing a new strategy for the medium-term (2021-23) and by resetting the staffing model (objective v).

2. Handover process

Through training, preparing policy documents/records of our knowledge (e.g. a proper relationship map), and next year’s handover window with new officers, we must ensure knowledge of both process and recent history in this organisation is captured before the end of the year. This will include providing a more formal structure for officers to follow during next year’s handover period, both in terms of the written documents they are to provide and in terms of 1:1 contact with successors.

3. Avoiding a vacuum

All the officers and student facing staff members should hold conversations with key student volunteers before the end of January to limit the risk important student volunteer and sabbatical roles go unfilled. We must ensure Trustee recruitment, especially for the new chair, is a priority, so that outgoing trustees have an opportunity to share knowledge and incoming trustees aren’t starting from scratch.

iii. Reviewing Union Governance/Democracy

1. Examining the Felix Editor and DPFS roles, and clarifying the relationship between OTs and staff more generally.
2. Clarifying our relationship with constituent unions.
3. Reviewing Union Council
4. Supporting the MD in clarifying the relationship between Board, its subcommittees, and Union Council.

iv. Coordinating a review of our offer to postgraduates

1. Bringing together the existing data on postgraduate engagement
2. Clarifying our desired outcomes
3. Reviewing the structure of the GSU: are the volunteer roles fit-for-purpose? Should the president be a remunerated role?

4. Representation within the Union – are postgraduate students adequately involved in our internal decision making
5. Strategies to drive engagement
6. The role CUs should play – PG students are now officially members of the old ‘undergraduate’ CUs (CGCU, RCSU, RSMU, ICSMSU)

v. Ensuring the Union’s staffing model is fit for the future

1. Working with the DPFS and systems manager to make recommendations about our student staffing model, with a view to increasing the number and quality of opportunities for students.
2. Clarifying the employment terms and the nature of the employment relationship with student staff, including developing an implementation plan for the London Living Wage.
3. Supporting the MD with considerations regarding the employment terms and the nature of the employment relationship with permanent staff.
4. Supporting the MD to develop recommendations for the permanent staffing structure for 21-22

vi. Supporting the Officer Trustee Team

1. Ensuring the team continues to work well together throughout the year.
2. Supporting officers with individual pieces of work, including these objectives
3. Coordinating any collective decisions which must be made
4. Coordinating or delegating work that must be distributed across the group
5. Ensuring the team is well aligned, so that effort isn’t duplicated, and individual officers aren’t ‘working against each other’
6. Mediating the relationship between senior managers and OTs where necessary

b. Deputy President (Education)

i. Work on the implementation of NSS recommendations

1. Helping the Dep Reps implement their specific departmental recommendations in their departments, monitoring their progress and supporting them as necessary in discussions with staff.
2. Working with several college staff on implementing the main college-wide NSS recommendations, coming up with action plans for each and seeing them through throughout the year.

ii. Strengthen the Rep Network

1. Offering reps more support throughout the year through more regular meetings and involving senior reps in university-wide representation more
 - Regular fortnightly meetings with all faculty reps
 - Termly, or bimonthly 1-2-1 meetings with all dep reps
 - Improving the platforms for sharing ideas across departments, incl. better meetings structure and more active Teams channels
 - Discussing decisions with reps more, through more active Teams channels; getting feedback on various documents and decisions coming to college-wide meetings
2. Improving the training we offer, especially to senior reps, and training reps early on (before the summer)
 - Put together a proper training to run after the Leadership Elections, more training around meeting prep, team leadership
3. Celebrate rep successes more and work on recording what reps do
 - Give reps more of a platform to share what they have achieved with the Imperial community
 - Improve the sharing of ideas and good practice across departments
 - Record progress for future generations of reps

iii. Review the PG Rep Networks

In the upcoming academic year I will aim to map properly the reps in each department, and discuss the following with them as well as with departmental staff:

1. How we can properly support PG reps, how they should be staying in touch with us, and who is there to support them
2. What changes should be done to make the rep networks more effective, (e.g. if the structures need to change and be more vertical)?
3. How we can change current processes to make the networks more integrated in what the Union does, e.g. how we communicate with the staff in departments, what meetings PG reps are invited to, how those can be ran to be more PG inclusive etc.
4. Identify areas where PG reps need to be more supported in training

c. Deputy President (Welfare)

i. Liberation & Community Development

Last year, I conducted a reform of Liberation at ICU which led to the creation of a new Working Class Officer, along with a distinct network attached to each of the (now) nine officers. The aim is to help distribute the workload from the officers, help build communities, raise the profile of L&C at Imperial, and facilitate more student-led campaigns.

This objective is to continue to develop Liberation & Community at Imperial by building up the new L&C networks. The nine networks are new this year so this will be a year of development and building up. The networks are: LGBTQ+, Disabilities, Gender Equality, BME, International, Interfaith, Mental Health, Ethics & Environment, and Working Class. The Disabilities, BME, Interfaith and Working Class networks will require the most development as these have the least currently-existing communities to tap into.

This will require systems development to embed the new networks onto our pre-existing systems (eActivities and the website), marketing support to create material and improve the website presence, and support from the representation team to support the aims of each network and develop campaigns.

ii. Representation Network Review

The Wellbeing Representation Network (WBRN) was introduced in 2017/18 (rushed, with no student consultation) and has been running largely the same since, with little proper review conducted. The Academic Representation Network (ARN) has been running for many years, and any review of the WBRN will need to consider its interaction with the ARN, minimising redundancy and maximising impact.

To review the Wellbeing Representation Network, in conjunction with the Academic Representation Network. This review will look at the core purpose of the WB rep network, evaluate impact of both networks, and review support for reps.

iii. COVID-19 Response

COVID-19 will undoubtedly have a profound effect on the student experience for the duration of this academic year. Social distancing measures are likely to cause increased isolation, mental health will be challenged, and remote learning will likely impact students educationally and in their wellbeing.

To respond to needs of students that develop out of the Covid-19 pandemic. In particular, responding to the impact on Covid on different groups of students – working with College to ensure an Equality Impact Assessment is made and providing support to different groups as needed. Furthermore, being responsive to the effect on residents in halls.

iv. Student Discipline/Harassment

To improve our student discipline processes and tackle culture around sexual harassment on campus. This involves both our internal procedures, as well as the College's procedures in a representative capacity. We will improve our support for student campaigns in this area, and improve comms around procedures and expectation setting.

v. Campaigns & Student Voice

Students at Imperial often don't feel like their voices are listened to – by the Union as well as the College. This is often reflected in the SES, and anecdotally from interactions with students.

Furthermore, in February 2018, Union Council voted to introduce a petitions system to help raise student issues – this is yet to be implemented. Our student-led campaigns process is non-existent, and support for pre-existing student-led campaigns has ground to a halt.

This objective is to improve the mechanisms through which students raise their voice at Imperial. It will involve better utilising both representation networks, improving platforms to raise student voice, improving the campaigns process and implementing the mandated petitions system.

d. Deputy President (Clubs & Societies)

i. Overhaul Training for CSP, MG & CU volunteers

1. Undergo an analysis of what training CSP committee members require, and any additional training needed by CU & MG committees. Consultation with students is essential – by end of Nov 2020
2. Sort eActivities training articles into searchable and useable training documents, understand what essential training articles are missing from eActivities and add to the sorted training articles, and improve articles required by students that are impossible to understand – 19 Dec 2020
3. Design new content ready for handover between current & future committees, ready by end of March 2021
4. Create all content for 2021/22 committees by the end of June 2021.

ii. Increase accessibility and inclusivity of our CSPs

1. Understand diversity within our CSPs now. This is data driven and should be done before Christmas.
2. Create an inclusivity checklist for our CSPs and develop inclusivity and accessibility training to be incorporated with Objective 1 by April 2020.
3. Develop a social sport programme as part of Imperial Athletes that has a low cost, low barrier to entry and requires low commitment. This should carry on the success of the Imperial Leagues in Term 1. Part of this programme will be needed for term 2 of academic year 2020/21. But the larger role out will be for academic year 2021/22.
4. Create opportunities for postgraduates to engage with CSP activity during term 3 and over the summer.

iii. Setting a long-term trajectory for CSP space and storage

1. Space and storage audit – by Dec 2020
2. CSP consultation by February 2021S
3. Resolve CSP storage issues by the end of July 2021
4. Create a 5, 10, and 20 year plan for storage and space to be approved by the Harlington Trust and college estates by May 2020
5. Work with DPFS and Pres to ensure that any developments by college at White City and in SK consider the needs of the Union and CSPs. – throughout rest of tenure.
6. Work with the Kay (operations manager) to ensure that our bars welcome CSPs and that there are no significant barriers for CSPs to book and run events in our bars.

iv. Support our CSPs by reviewing the most broken processes

1. Work with HoMS, SO&DM and DPFS to understand what the Union does that is good for CSPs and the Union does that hinders CSPs – by 31st Oct 2020. This will then require a consultation with students to ensure we are focusing resources in the right areas
2. Understand what CSPs need the Union for, and what the Union needs our CSPs to do – Nov 2020.
3. Outline the processes that CSPs need and create a matrix of problems. Define the 2 most broken processes and process map these under the new process mapping system – by end of Jan 2020.
 - a. Create new solutions and fix problems with these 2 processes, which are likely to be room bookings and risk assessments, and integrate any changes into Union systems.
4. Create a plan with the SO&D, and systems team for reviewing other CSP processes over the coming years to progressively improve the student experience – March 2020.

5. Roll out new processes and systems for start of AY 2021/22
6. Develop a document storage and sharing policy for staff by January 2020

e. Deputy President (Finance & Services)

i. Conduct a Commercial Services Review

1. Conducting a SWOT analysis of our Commercial Services;
2. Creating a Commercial Services strategic plan;
3. Creating a venues plan;
4. Creating a sustainable staffing model;
5. Reviewing our marketing/comms for our services;
6. Reviewing our EPOS system & Online Shop experience;
7. Implementing specific policies (i.e. pricing policies).

ii. Develop a framework for the use of the Union Building for CSPs

1. Create a suite of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between the Union and key student groups to understand how we can get the best out of the spaces we provide; who should be maintaining them; how they are to be used; and, who should be funding them.
2. Implement an annual usage monitoring plan.
3. Create Preventive Maintenance Plans (PMPs) for each of our student spaces.
4. Engaging in a large student consultation around our spaces to understand current and desired use.

iii. Review and change CSP processes, policies, and services, which are currently too dependent on OT time

1. Improving specific processes and policies to shift more of the administrative burden to permanent staff;
2. Improve approval and query response times;
3. Introduce a CRM system for student queries.

iv. Provide a better Union presence/space on other campuses

1. Undergo a review of the support we provide on campuses currently.
2. Form a White City Exec to give students in White City a voice to make necessary changes and help us guide the direction of the developments.
3. Improve support to the Silwood Exec as they currently receive little support and struggle given students are typically only around for one year.

v. See through the Union Concert Hall redevelopment

To lead the UCH redevelopment project, initiated in 2018-19, to its conclusion and to ensure it stays focused towards the needs of current and future students.