



**Imperial College Students' Union  
Board of Trustees / 09 December 2020**

**Minutes (09 December 2020 Board of Trustees)**

**1. Introduction & Attendance**

Jill Finney (JF) (Chair)	Phil Power (PP)
Stephen Richardson (SR)	Graham Parker (GP)
Kate Owen (KO)	Michaela Flegrova (MF)
Abhijay Sood (AS)	Shervin Sabeghi (SS)
Sam Lee (LS)	Alex Auyang (AA)
Ross Unwin (RU)	Lloyd James (LJ)
Chris Carter (CC)	Milia Hasbani (MH)

In attendance

Tom Flynn (Managing Director) (TF)  
Tom Newman (Head of Membership Services) (TN)  
Jayne Hufford (Interim Director of Finance)  
Ashley Cory (Systems Manager) (AC)  
Victoria Agbontaen (Governance Officer) (VA)

**2. Apologies**

Kelvin Zhang (KZ)  
Dorothy Griffiths (DG)

**3. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved pending an amendment of SR initials on page 3.

**4. Matters arising/Forward Agenda**

TF confirmed that he recently met with College's VAT team and the respective letter has been sent to HMRC. TF said he would provide an update on the judicial review at the next meeting.

**5. Conflict of interest declarations**

None

**6. Consideration of confidential business**

TF stated his MD Report includes confidential business.

**7. Managing Directors' Report**

TF gave a brief overview of the paper highlighting to Board the strategic plan and development which is a critical piece of work for the progression of the Union. TF noted that recruitment for the Director of Finance and Resources would be taking place next week and he is confident that an appointment would be made before Christmas. TF stated that due to the current financial circumstance of the Union, we have opted out of the increase pay relativity increase this year.

*Board noted the update and thanked the MD for providing detailed objectives.*

## **8. Officer Trustee Team Update**

AS gave a verbal update, highlighting the work the OT's are doing specifically the regular College meetings, work on socially responsible investments and scholarship support for refugees and asylum seekers. AS noted that work on halls-rent that was temporarily paused last year has resumed and both AS and SS will be focused on this in the upcoming weeks. AS added that the OT's have started to spend more time on communications going out to students and feedback so far has been incredibly positive.

- i. A question was asked by MH whether AS could provide an update on the 'improvement of facilities and amenities in halls' paper that was brought to Council in December. Trustees were informed there was unanimous support for the principle of the paper which was approved. This was subject to an amendment of the paper for the Union to 'lobby' the proposed changes to College. SS was actioned to take this work forward with College.
- ii. A question was asked by CC if there were any notable outcomes from the 'how's it going' survey that was recently circulated to the student body. Trustees were informed that the findings showed that students were broadly content with the online education but that feelings of loneliness and hopelessness amongst students from the survey.

*Board noted the update.*

## **9. Q1 Management Accounts**

JH gave a brief overview of the accounts, outlining that in October the Union made an operating surplus of £42,000 which is in line with the budget. JH noted that Trustees should be aware of the four factors that are driving the financial performance of the Union: under-performance in retail, under-performance in bars/catering (due to the number of staff required for safety), surplus from the Freshers fair and bad debts that had been written off in 2019-20 FYE.

JH noted that the second government lockdown in December will adversely affect the financial position of the organisation, however the Union has continued to make use of the furlough scheme to help minimise the impact.

TF added that the shop has now successfully launched online and made over £7,000 worth of sales in the first week.

- i. A question was asked by GP as to why staffing costs had increased and what extent the staff costs is likely to decrease in the next quarter. Trustees were informed in order to maintain safety in the bars, security staff have been hired to help manage the risks associated with opening the bars. TF is hopeful that the development of the table-service app will help mitigate the need for such high numbers of staff, but this will only be known once the app is ready for use. Trustees were informed that this will continue to be constantly monitored.

*Board considered the financial performance of the Union against budget for the first quarter of the year.*

## **10. Risk Management Policy**

TF briefed the Trustees with an overview of the Union's approach to risk in the past, nothing that the policy has been developed to add structure around it and to enable the Union to

demonstrate a formal risk-management framework when requested by College and other external Stakeholders.

- i. A question was asked by SL what approval the Strategic Risk Register would need from College and who is responsible for managing this at College. Trustees were informed that the SRR is managed by the Board, primarily by the MD but as the College are also regulators of the Union, the Audit and Risk Committee that is formed as part of College Council also require oversight of the SRR.
- ii. A question was asked by MH how individual CSP risk assessments might be considered as part of wider risk management. Trustees were informed that CSP risk assessments are reviewed by the Student Opportunities and Development team, which a number of the OT's work closely with. TF noted that the role of the Board is around governance of risk and not managing risk, but any large incidents would be noted in the MD report that comes to Board.
- iii. JF highlighted that the challenge is in engaging the organisation and the Board to ensure a full understanding, responsibilities, and the importance of the SRR, specifically about F&R and the value of doing a deep dive in to how we secure Board ownership of this.

*Board considered and approved the proposed risk management policy.*

## **11. Term Two Update**

TN highlighted it is important to recognise that a large population of students will remain in halls over the break, so the Union has put together services including a buddy scheme, online social programmes etc. to continue to engage these students throughout the holidays. 568 will continue to operate as an in-person service which will be aided through the use of the new table-service app.

- i. A question was asked by MH if alcohol takeaway service had been considered and whether the Union has a license for this. MH also asked if the marquee will be kept for the duration of term two. Trustees were informed the Union does have a license for alcohol to be taken away and the marquee will be extended for term two, however how the space will be used is still being considered.

*Board noted the updated on the current plans for term two, and the partial reopening of Students' Union services.*

## **12. Strategic Plan Discussion**

TF gave a brief summary on the ongoing work the Steering group have completed regarding the strategic plan, noting that the Steering Group had met a number of times to work on progressing our new strategy. TF added that Trustee input is key to help broaden the conversation and presented Trustees with some major questions to consider.

*Board noted the update on the current thinking around the new strategy.*

## **13. Values Workshop**

TN stated that we want to develop our values together, so it is imperative for all Stakeholder groups and everyone involved in the organisation to be shaping these which is the ultimate purpose of the session. TN advised Trustees that Union staff had already participated in this

workshop, but it is key to obtain the perspectives of students as well as the Trustees. TN noted that the OT's will be undertaking this workshop with students by the end of January. TN requested 3-5 words from Trustees that summarise the collective values of the Union.

### **Any Other Business**

AS discussed the issue of accusations of bullying from Senior Management staff in the College that has been circulating in the news which was followed by a vague statement from the President of Imperial College.

AS explained that following the College statement, a response was sent from the Officer Team to the College requesting further clarity and details. College has since responded with a letter directly to the team of which can be found on the ICU website.