

Imperial College Union
Minutes of The first ordinary Meetings of Union Council
22nd September 2020 - 12:00pm – 2:00pm

Present

Role	Name
Deputy President (Finance and Services)	Sam Lee (Chair) (SL)
Union President	Abhijay Sood (AS)
Deputy President (Clubs & Societies)	Ross Unwin (RU)
Arts and Entertainment Sector Chair	India Marsden (IM)
Council Representative	Ansh Bhatnagar (AB)
Council Representative	Michael Kohn (MK)
Ethics & the Environment Welfare Officer	Danielle Gimbosh (DG)
KNE Environmental President	Petchara Newson (PC)
Knowledge Sector Treasurer	Christos Mentis Cravaris (CMC)
Ethics & Environment Officer	Chin Stephanie Yeung (CY)
CHUG Chair	Dan Price (DP_)
Ethics & the Environment Campaigns Officer	Neha Yasin (NY)
DramSoc Representative	Ellen Redgrave (ER)
Bar Representative	Niamh McAuley (NA)
Knowledge Sector Vice-Chair (Careers)	Gordan Yat Cheung (GC)

Observers:

Governance Officer	Victoria Agbontaen (VA)
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Apologies:

Ethics & the Environment Community Engagement Officer	Jumana Ibrahim SalahEldin Mohamed (JM)
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Item	Actions
1. Chair's welcome and Introductions 1.1. Chair welcomed members of SSB to the first 2020-21 meeting and gave an overview of the new format that SSB will be operating in this year.	
2. Apologies: 2.1. Apologies from: Jumana Mohamed (JM)	
3. Minutes of Previous Meeting N/A.	
4. Matters Arising/Action Tracker N/A	
Regular Updates	
5. DPFS Update 5.1. SL gave a brief overview of the DPFS report that was presented to Council in November and December. 5.2. SL highlighting the key focus of the report was the modifications to the DPFS job description. The DPFS has been very operational heavy (signing contracts, processing refunds) which means the role cannot focus on long-term improvements and goals. 5.3. SL noted that there are a number of projects he is looking to undertake throughout the year which are outlined in the November Council report. 5.4. Additionally, SL informed SSB that as well as playing the role where policies can be approved to improve the organisation, SBB is also an area to challenge the DPFS and scrutinise issues and decisions made. 5.5. MK questioned what putting things in 'red' meant. SL informed SSB that the parts in red demonstrate which parts of his manifesto link to which projects he is currently working on and will undertake throughout the year.	
6. Commercial Update 6.1. SL explained that due to Covid-19, this year has been tricky and involved constant firefighting. However, despite this the bars have been able to re-open. 6.2. SL noted, the bar is there to be run as a social space for students to come and build a community of friendships. Commercial spaces are primarily there to be a social space for members. 6.3. SL added that the bar was open over Christmas to give students staying in halls to have a space to stay social, however, change due to change in government guidance, this is no longer allowed. 6.4. SL informed SSB there had been a large staff re-organisation as the previous structure was not sustainable and the Union would like to include student-staff a lot more. 6.5. SL added there has been a lot of work being put in to opening a new online shop which will enable the Union to have a much better online retail presence for students and other stakeholders who want to buy products from Union shops.	

<p>7. UCH Redev Update</p> <p>7.1. SL gave a brief history of the 'Union Concert Hall' which is one of the spaces in the Union Beit building noting there was a Harlington Grant £425,000 fund to redevelop the UCH. The redev includes new seating, foyer etc.</p> <p>7.2. SL informed SSB that an initial design has been provided but it was deemed not in student interest and was guided with little to no student input. This meant that design did not materialise what was wanted from the initial project. Subsequently, College have agreed to carry out design work to improve this.</p> <p>7.3. RU asked what the timescale on the UCH Redev project is. SL informed SSB that the aim is to for it to be completed by April but may be likely to extend into the next academic year. However, this is dependent on external bookings, CSP activity etc. SL emphasised the project should be fit for purpose and not rushed to a completion date.</p>	
<p>8. SRI Update</p> <p>8.1. AS gave a verbal update regarding SRI, highlighting that last year he wrote a paper to College Council, requesting a process to look at divestment generally.</p> <p>8.2. The result of this was a policy that allowed the College to take steps to take its investment portfolio more seriously.</p> <p>8.3. With the start academic year, College has a group which have started the process again to look into operationalising this policy to consider how will the College engage with these firms etc.</p> <p>8.4. AS noted that the group will be launching a consultation on the mechanisms at which the College engages with these firms and what circumstances it becomes a requirement to walk away from these investments.</p> <p>8.5. AS explained there is the question of arms and the challenge compared to that of fossil fuels.</p> <p>8.6. MK questioned the College's attitude on sustainability and if they want to change that as Imperial were reported bottom 20 universities in a recently published article. AS explained that the College is keen to start taking steps in the right direction to make improvements in this area. However, AS believes they couldn't be doing more to push this if they want to transform this issue.</p> <p>8.7. AS said that he would like to regularly discuss SRI at SSB meetings and if any members would like to express further interest to get in touch with himself and SL directly.</p>	
Substantive Items	
<p>9. DPFS Role Review</p> <p>9.1. AS highlighted that the DPFS does not exist in many other Student Unions', stating that the internal motivation is that there has a been conflict between the DPFS role and management in Commercial services for the last few years.</p> <p>9.2. Additionally, the DPFS is highly operational compared to the other Officers (payment runs, contracts etc.), which should be assigned to fulltime Union support staff. As a result, the DPFS is unable to spend</p>	

<p>time influencing the College in areas such as estates or building planning, faculty level operational decisions etc.</p> <p>9.3. AS added that it is important to preserve the role but to reduce the operational workload in a way that does not make the DPFS role irrelevant in a few years.</p> <p>9.4. SL noted he felt the DPFS has become the second DPCS role and has not been its own role, focusing mainly on the finances of CSP's, which is a result of the culture of the Union in the past.</p> <p>9.5. SL added that these changes need to be made rather quickly due to the upcoming Leadership elections so the byelaws and job description for the role can be amended in time for this deadline.</p>	<p>To bring a paper to Council with a new job description for the DPFS.</p>
<p>10. User Groups</p> <p>10.1. SL gave an overview of what User Groups are explaining that CHUG is a User Group that was formed by individuals who regularly use the concert hall as a forum to discuss bookings of the space for societies who cannot use other spaces, how the space can be improved, how it is used etc.</p> <p>10.2. Fundamentally, SL explained that the Union has a lot of specialist space and has been very poor in managing it in the past, which we are now active steps to improve and the Union will take responsibility for day-to-day maintenance.</p> <p>10.3. SL questioned to SSB whether having small groups that manage the functions of a space and keeps the Union accountable. AS added it would be helpful for SSB Members to share any questions, suggestions or feedback they have regarding User Groups with SL before the next meeting.</p>	<p>RU to take the User Groups space issue to CSPB and feedback to SSB.</p> <p>AS + SL to produce a paper re User Groups with specific discussion themes for discussion at the next SSB Meeting.</p>
<p>11. Actions regarding Greenwashing Paper</p> <p>11.1. SL noted that the Greenwashing Paper had been rejected at Council, but felt it was important to discuss the principal and solutions of the paper at SSB.</p> <p>11.2. AS added that this topic is not only motivated by the paper but has been something the Union has considered for a while. AS highlighted that here are a small number of student societies who depend on funding from certain sectors and if there is a way to satisfy their financial needs and the Union's ethical principles, then that should be done.</p> <p>11.3. AS stated it is important to discuss how this is practically implemented in a way that does not harm student activity or individual clubs.</p> <p>11.4. IM questioned whether it is only the sponsorship contracts of the paper that the discussion is being focused on as it also club activities and what they are able to do with those companies, which could be entirely separate from them just solely being sponsored as the two are not always linked.</p> <p>11.5. AS suggested and recommended that sponsorship work should be treated separately to events and activities. SL agreed that the best</p>	

<p>course of action would be to undertake the work on sponsorship contracts separately.</p> <p>11.6. AS noted that it was untrue that the paper was not accepted by Council as there were individuals who were concerned with people's future careers in the fossil fuel sector. Majority of Council were concerned with the free speech question and practical implementation of the policy.</p> <p>11.7. GC added that the Knowledge Sector chair/VP do believe in the principal of the paper but are concerned about the details of wordings and specific actions. GC said that further detailed discussion needs to be had before taking any action that will affect CSP's.</p> <p>11.8. SL said that SSB would have been a good place to preliminary bring this paper before taking it to Council would have been the right steps to take, so the committee could provide further feedback and direction.</p>	
<p>12. Commercial Bookings</p> <p>12.1. SL noted that Commercial bookings has not been handled efficiently in the past, so the paper outlines a way to improve and formalise which stakeholders get priority over spaces and when which has been agreed with the Senior Leadership team.</p> <p>12.2. SL outlined that during term time, CSP's get priority and outside of term time if Senior Leadership deem it appropriate that the external activity has a more positive impact on the organisation (financial, giving opportunities for student involvement and engagement) then this may take priority over CSP's outside of term time.</p> <p>12.3. SL noted that commercial bookings procedure will be reviewed on an annual basis and depending on pattern availability, this may be amended in the future.</p>	
<p>13. Summer Ball/Events Plan</p> <p>13.1. SL explained that due to covid-19 it is unlikely an in-person Summer Ball would be able to take place this year. However, SL agreed that it is important to have student engagement in the creative process, (a working group).</p> <p>13.2. SL informed SSB he is putting a paper of how the Summer Ball may look this year which may possibly be a 'Summer Events' programme, spread over a couple of days of activities with the possibility of a headliner.</p> <p>13.3. IM said she did not feel an online alternative to the summer ball would be worthwhile as a lot of work could go in to this with potentially not a great output as students may be tired of online events by that point.</p> <p>13.4. IM added that it is important that students who will meet to discuss Summer Ball should meet more frequently than SSB and she is aware of a few students from Arts and Ents who would be interested in being a part of this.</p> <p>13.5. RU said that a series of Summer events might be sensible, and each MG could have their own events, i.e. sports ball, arts ball etc.</p>	

<p>13.6. ER agreed that the Summer events could be a good idea, especially as no clubs are meeting in person. One big event may be a nice end to the year for students.</p> <p>13.7. NM also agreed that an online event would be good for students as the majority of them will not be in London or on campus and not having any online aspect may isolate other students who are not able to participate in person. NM also added that the use of agency staff should be considered if in-person activities go ahead so student staff can also enjoy the activities and not have to work.</p>	
<p>14. Welcome Back 2021</p> <p>14.1. SL informed SSB that there will be a one-week period of 'welcome back' to term two. Week one will be focused on events and activities and asked SSB to put forward ideas for any events.</p>	
<p>Any Other Business None.</p>	