

# Felix Mutual Expectations – January 2021

*Abhijay P. Sood – Union President*

In response to concerns about the performance of the Editor and the output of the paper, the Union President joined a Felix editorial team meeting on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, in order to facilitate a discussion on mutual expectations for the editorial team and Editor going forward. The need for a more comprehensive review was also discussed. The outcomes of the meeting follow.

## Expectations

The overarching feedback was that the Felix Editor should be significantly more communicative, in order to make it easier for the wider team to do their jobs. In particular, concerns were raised about instances where volunteer effort has been sought, been provided, and then this has failed to result in a visible outcome (e.g. where articles or whole editions have been submitted and edited, but not published). In such cases, the Felix team would, entirely reasonably, expect a proper explanation.

### The Felix Editor will:

- **Respond to queries within two working days**
  - o Short queries should be directed to the Felix Editor Teams account or the role Facebook account (rather than Calum’s personal account). Lengthier queries should be emailed to felix@imperial.ac.uk.
  - o Live/fast moving news stories may necessitate more rapid responses; messaging on Teams would be best for such instances.
- **Keep regular work hours of 9am-6pm on weekdays**
  - o Non-urgent queries may not be addressed outside these hours
- **Arrange virtual “office hours”** (Action 1.2 – see below)
  - o This will allow team members to e.g. “drop in” to a Teams call where the Editor may be present and working, where they can pose casual questions or initiate casual conversation. This is intended to replicate the serendipitous interactions which would occur under normal circumstances.
- **Write to the editorial team once a week** to share updates on that week’s work
  - o These may be brief and relatively informal but should ensure the committee is aware of what the Editor is up to, while making opportunities to support such work clearer.
  - o These updates should be shared in advance of the Friday evening editorial meetings.
  - o A version of these notes should be shared with the Union President and Union Director of Membership Services (Tom Newman).
- **Offer a proper explanation if things go wrong**
  - o It’s impossible to guarantee that the paper will run perfectly well. In cases where work falls short of expectations, or unforeseen problems arise, the Felix editor will **proactively communicate the reasons why** to the Felix team, the Union President, and the Director of Membership Services, and will suggest an approach for overcoming such challenges.
- **Provide a clear schedule of delegation** to make responsibilities between different team members clearer and to ensure work can continue should he be indisposed (Action 1.3)
  - o This schedule should reflect the fact that those the Editor might delegate to are all volunteers, so expectations on them should not be too high.

### The Felix team will:

- **Attend the weekly editorial meetings**
- **Stick to a mutually agreed workflow** (Action 1.4)
- **Voice frustrations directly**
  - o Where individual team members have specific grievances, they will raise these with the responsible party. In the first instance, this should entail writing in private or meeting on a one-to-one basis.
  - o If the response has not been satisfactory, the matter should be escalated to the Editor.
  - o Where the responsible party is the Felix Editor and the response has not been satisfactory, or where the Felix Editor has failed to handle an internal matter satisfactorily, the matter should be escalated to the Union President.
    - The Editor is committed to being more responsive to these sorts of queries in particular going forward.
- **Direct inquiries about social media to the Deputy Editor (IZ) and the Games Editor/Social Media Officer (AD) in the first instance, rather than the Felix Editor.**

### The Union President will:

- **Meet with the Felix Editor at least once a fortnight**
- **Make himself available to meet Felix team members where necessary**
  - o For example, if grievances cannot be resolved internally, or if members don't feel their voice is being heard adequately.
- **Provide further support at the request of the Felix editor or the Felix team** depending on availability.

### Actions:

No.	Action	Responsible	Due date
1.1	Provide further training sessions on the new website	Calum D. Andy W.	25-26/01
1.2	Schedule office hours and communicate to the team how these will work	Calum D.	25/01
1.3	Write a draft schedule of delegation for responsibilities within the team*	Calum D.	29/01
1.4	Draft a clear workflow, in writing, for the paper under present circumstances*	Calum D.	05/02
1.5	Speak to the Systems Team about server challenges and get more information on way forward, exploring possibility for independent hosting; update Calum, Andy, Ahmad on this	Abhijay S.	01/02

\*To be discussed and agreed at an editorial meeting. All team members, including the editor, will abide by what is agreed at these fora, or will explain why they have not been able to do so.

### Further Outcomes:

In addition to the above points, and in light of the challenges the paper has faced in recent months, a Felix review for 2021 was discussed. There was broad agreement behind the need for a review, covering:

- The selection criteria for the role of editor

- The structure of the committee
- The way the role is supported by the Union/where it sits in the Union's own structures
- The operation of the paper and its output

To give time to conduct this work properly, it would be necessary to delay the election for the role of Felix Editor. This would give time for a thorough review without forcing us to delay necessary changes until the next academic year.

The Union President's proposition is for a genuine, substantive consultation process on the above elements. If the Union's Board of Trustees, the Felix team, and the wider student body cannot reach a reasonable degree of consensus around an alternative selection process, the role would be run in the Summer elections by default. There was agreement, or at least no dissent, for this course of action at the meeting.

### Acknowledgement

I want to thank all the volunteers who attended and contributed to the meeting; your commitment to the paper is clear as it is welcome, and your dedication will ensure its success. I also want to thank Calum for being forthcoming about challenges and previous shortcomings, and for the willingness he has expressed to work to surmount these.

I hope that, under these terms, we can work together to restore Felix to its proper place at Imperial and secure its position for the future.