

# Imperial College Union

## External Trustee Information Pack

### WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in joining the Board of Trustees at Imperial College Union.

We are an exciting, inclusive membership charity and our core purpose is to represent, support and empower all 20,000 students studying at Imperial College London. We work in close partnership with Imperial College London and are proud to deliver services to support students studying at one of the world's truly outstanding higher education institutions.

We are currently recruiting for a new Lay (external) Trustee to join our Board of Trustees with experience in either people and culture or organisational change.

This is an incredibly exciting time to join Imperial College Union. This year we launched our new strategic plan, designed to guide our charity to become a highly effective, impactful and sustainable organisation.

Imperial College Union is hugely diverse, providing a broad range of services and support to Imperial students. We are constantly evolving, to ensure we meet the needs of our members and provide them with the best possible experience during their studies. We are one of the oldest students' unions in the UK, steeped in history and tradition.

Joining us means joining a Board responsible for the strategic direction of our charity. Being a trustee in a students' union is an extremely rewarding experience. You will get the opportunity to work in close partnership with student representatives, many of whom are just embarking on their leadership journey. This is a fantastic opportunity to mentor and support our future leaders, imparting your own experience and industry knowledge to help them develop and thrive.

This pack outlines exactly the type of person we are looking for and what skills we believe we need on our Board. If you are interested in talking about the opportunity, please do contact us.

Thank you,

Dr Lloyd James (Union President)

Jill Finney (Chair of Trustees)

Dr Tom Flynn (Managing Director)

## ABOUT IMPERIAL COLLEGE UNION

Imperial College Union is one of the oldest students' unions in the UK. We exist to support and empower Imperial students, to ensure they get the most from their university experience.

There is so much that makes Imperial College Union special. We are lucky to work in a historic campus environment located in a bustling, beautiful part of London. Imperial students are some of the highest performing and dedicated students in the world. They are hugely committed to their university education and want to get the most from their experience. This means they are incredibly engaged and keen to participate in the activities we offer.

We run a diverse set of services, activities and support networks for Imperial students:

- **Student representation:** We empower a network of student leaders and academic representatives to champion the collective voice of students and ensure every individual student gets the best possible experience at Imperial.
- **Student Advice Centre** - We run an independent and confidential advice service providing support on a broad range of academic and non-academic issues.
- **Clubs, societies and projects** - We support Imperial students to set up and manage over 380 different interest groups facilitating connections between students and ensuring they feel a sense of belonging during their time at Imperial.
- **Student media** - Imperial students volunteer their time to a number of different media groups including the Felix newspaper and we provide training and support to ensure they get the most from their experience.
- **Events and venues** - We provide events and activities within our different spaces, offering students the chance to study together, socialise and make lasting friendships during their time at university.

Our staff team is made up of around 50 permanent staff and over 200 student staff who work across our services in part-time roles whilst they study. We are passionate about providing these employment opportunities to Imperial students, enabling them to support their studies and gain valuable employability and leadership skills.

## OUR NEW STRATEGY - GOING 'BACK TO BASICS'

Like all organisations, we have spent the last 18 months responding to the challenges created by the pandemic. But we have also used this time to reflect on the inner workings of our organisation, trends within the higher education sector and the needs of our members. Working together and in consultation with Imperial students, we identified areas in which we need to improve in order to become a more effective organisation. We have made significant progress against these areas already and are incredibly excited about the opportunities our changes will bring for students.

We have created a new 'back to basics' strategy to guide our organisation over the coming years. With it comes a new mission statement:

*To make a positive impact on the experiences and outcomes of all Imperial College students from all backgrounds*

and a commitment to empowering each and every Imperial student to have the very best experience whilst they are with us.

Our strategy is underpinned by our **Theory of Change**:

1. Positive impact is delivered by a combination of service provision (doing things for students, or helping them do things for themselves), and advocating for students (representing their interests to others).
2. Providing services for students can be done via direct delivery (doing it ourselves), in partnership with another organisation (most often the College), or via third parties. The appropriate model will differ depending on the nature of the service and where competitive advantage lies.
3. Advocating for students can be done at both the individual and collective level, using a range of lobbying and campaigning techniques that both rely on a combination of student voice, student insight and student interest.
4. We must be a sustainable, effective and credible organisation in order to provide services and advocate for students' interests successfully. Legitimacy must be earned and will be a key driver for success in both areas of impact.

We have seven clear aims which guide all our activities and how we support Imperial students. Our aims are:

1. To improve the academic and educational experience of students
2. To support and enhance the wellbeing of students
3. To strengthen and help create active and inclusive student communities
4. To facilitate the personal and professional development of students
5. To empower students to change the world around them
6. To challenge and reduce inequalities affecting students
7. To enable students to have fun.

Alongside our new strategy, we reflected on the challenges created by the pandemic to examine the sustainability of our funding model. We have worked in close partnership with Imperial College London to secure a new financial model for our organisation. Through a generous increase in our grant funding, we are now less reliant on our commercial ventures and can guarantee delivery of our core student-facing services in these volatile times. This represents an exciting step change for Imperial College Union and an opportunity for us to change the focus of what we do to be truly student-led.

## **OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Our Board of Trustees is the most senior governing body at Imperial College Union. The Board is responsible for providing strategic direction to our charity, ensuring that we are meeting our charitable aims and working according to our mission, vision and values. The membership of our Board comprises a combination of current Imperial students who are democratically elected by the student body, students appointed to ensure the Board represents our diverse student body and Lay (external) Trustees.

Being a member of a students' union Board is different to other charities. It is very fast-paced, as our Board needs to adapt to the ever-changing HE context and needs of our members. The makeup of our Board changes annually, as new students are elected to representative roles.

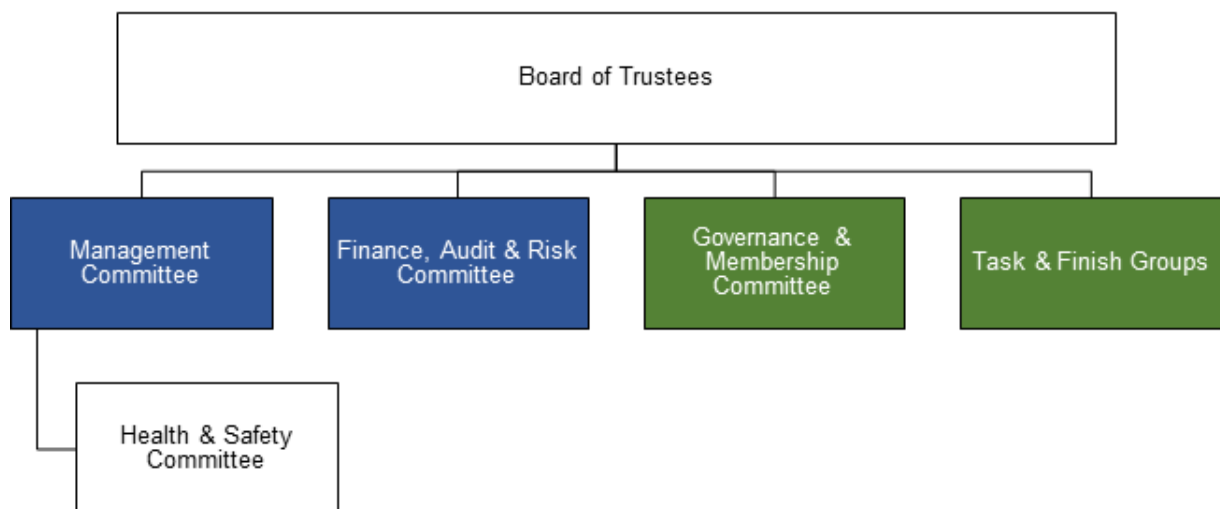
This leads to great diversity of thinking and broad life experiences among Board members, which is paramount to creating energetic discursive meetings.

Lay Trustees are chosen based on their skills, experience and what value they can bring to the Board. Having a diverse mix of skills, experiences, backgrounds and industries among our lay trustees is crucial to running a highly effective Board.

We actively seek out trustees from outside the student movement, as well as those with SU sector knowledge, as we know this improves our governance and ensures a broad range of views and experiences are considered.

Any new trustees that join us receive a comprehensive induction. This will help you to understand the full nature of Imperial College Union, how we operate and your role and responsibilities as trustee of our Board.

The Board meets six times a year. In addition, we have several subcommittees of the Board which our trustees are part of. These are shown in the diagram below. These committees meet virtually, some on a quarterly basis and others annually and as required.



#### Keys

- Blue = Standing Committee (meets regularly)
- Green = Ad hoc (meets annually and then as required)

## **Our External Trustees**

### **Jill Finney – Chair**

Jill's background is in Executive Marketing and Communications roles across large public and private sector organisations where she has spent a significant amount of time in leadership roles and strategy setting. Jill is also a Lay Trustee on other 3rd sector Boards but is always keen to make sure she has the right amount of time for the role of Chair at ICU.

### **Professor Dorothy Griffiths OBE FCGI FRSA**

Dot Griffiths spent her career at Imperial College and her final academic role was as Dean of the Business School. Following her retirement as Dean she was the Provost's Envoy for

Gender Equality. She now chairs a large NHS mental health and community services trust and a charity. She is also a lay Trustees on the Council at the University of Bath.

#### **Dr Phil Power**

Phil Power is the College's Director of Student Administration. Phil is a graduate of the College and worked for the Union from 2005-14. Phil is a strong ally of students and in addition to his role for the College is also the Secretary of the College's Exploration Board. Phil has extensive experience of both the Union and the College, as well as having served as a trustee of other charities. He also chairs the Governance and Membership subcommittee.

#### **Professor Stephen Richardson**

Stephen spent most of his working life at Imperial College. He was appointed as a Lecturer in Chemical Engineering at Imperial College in 1978 and Principal of the Faculty of Engineering from 2008 to 2010. In 1996 he was made a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering and in 2015 was made a CBE for his work on chemical engineering education and safety. He was President of the Institution of Chemical Engineers from 2019 to 2021 and started as a Lay Trustee of Imperial College Union in 2019.

#### **Dr Dan Wagner**

Dan is a management consultant and non-exec board member. He advises clients in various industries, including automotive, industrial goods and financial services. Dan holds a PhD in Computer Science from Imperial College London and an MSc in Mathematics from Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen.

## **WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?**

First and foremost, it's important to realise we're a values-based organisation, so we're looking for people who can stand with us and champion the areas that we believe in. We are a democratic organisation, meaning we are always listening, so we can understand views that might be different from our own. Nowhere does this work better than on our Board of Trustees!

We are interested in receiving applications from individuals keen to provide strategic direction to our organisation and work with us to ensure we develop and thrive in the future. As a trustee you will focus on:

- Helping ensure that we comply with any charity law, rules and regulations governing our work
- Actively contributing to Board discussions to provide clear strategic direction for our charity
- Helping to promote the values and safeguard the reputation of Imperial College Union
- Working collaboratively with other trustees and our Managing Director to contribute to the effective and efficient operations of our organisation
- Ensuring our charity's governance is of the highest standard.

While not essential, we particularly welcome applications from individuals from communities currently under-represented on our Board, including people of colour, those with disabilities and those with caring responsibilities.

## SPECIFIC SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

In addition to the above, we would like to receive applications from individuals experienced in one of the following areas:

**Organisational change:** At Imperial College Union, we have been through a period of significant change and are now partway through a complex transformation project. Over the last twelve months we were required to significantly shrink our staffing structure and are now in the process of rebuilding, in line with our new strategic aims. We would greatly value having the skills and expertise of an individual experienced in organisational change on our Board of Trustees, to help guide us through the next phase of our journey.

**People and culture:** The last eighteen months have been an incredibly challenging time for Imperial staff and students. We know our people are our best asset and that Imperial College Union is already a great place to work, however we know we can do more. We have begun a review into our people and culture, which will help shape our future direction and ensure we continue to motivate and empower our people to be the best they can be. We would like to bring onto our Board a trustee who has specific experience in people and culture, to help us foster a culture of diversity, empathy and collaboration in all we do.

We are looking for people to join us who can help create the behaviours and embody the culture to fit our values. Our values aren't just a list of words in a strategic plan. They govern who we are, how we work and everything we do at Imperial College Union.

## HOW TO APPLY

If you are up for the challenge and would like to apply for a position on our Board of Trustees, please submit:

- An up-to-date CV
- A supporting statement of no more than 2 sides of A4, detailing why you would like to be considered, your relevant experience and expertise and what you think you can bring to the role.

Please submit the above to [icu.board@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:icu.board@imperial.ac.uk).

The deadline for applications is 9am on Monday 24 January.

For an informal conversation about the role, please contact Tom Flynn, Imperial College Union's Managing Director on [t.flynn@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:t.flynn@imperial.ac.uk).

We hope you will join us on our journey.