

**Imperial College Union  
Board of Trustees / 13 July 2022**

**Student Trustee Reflections**

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Purpose: To provide the Board with a reflection on the year as a Trustee of Imperial College Union

**What have you learnt during your time as a Trustee and what went well?**

As a Trustee, I have had the opportunity to not only become involved in the Imperial community but also get the opportunity to learn more about the not-for-profit sector. I have learned about the inner workings of the Union as an organization and learned about business strategies and markets from an 'insider's perspective'. This has also been an opportunity for professional development because I have had exposure to what 'strategy' entails and been able to further develop leadership in a group setting- especially in an environment where I am one of the younger individuals in a room. I have been grateful that it has been a very positive experience, and that everyone has been respectful and accommodating.

I think one of the things that went well is that I have incorporated well into the dynamics of the Board and I feel comfortable and confident in voicing my opinions or asking questions. Even though I am not as experienced as other members, I could still contribute in both the committee as a whole and as a member of the Governance & Membership subcommittee.

**What did you particularly value being part of the Board as a Trustee and why?**

Being a Trustee has given me the chance to support and shape the work/strategic development of the Union. As a student, I was particularly interested in the sustainability of the Union, not only environmentally but also moving forwards what is the Union and University doing to keep up with current events and movements, etc. Understanding what is current in the world, especially from a student perspective, is imperative to ensuring students benefit from the facilities available to them.

Contributing to the Union's strategic direction, as a student, is a unique position to be in and has given me very valuable experiences. For example, I got a chance to fully understand how the different roles of our student union incorporate to form the functioning body. I also got the chance to be a member of an interview panel and sit on the other side of the table which is useful in general as a professional because you learn about what an interviewer is looking for. The Board is responsible for managing the Student Union and ensuring its good governance as a charity, so this has given me valuable experience to learning what constitutes a charity and how one should be run.

**Did you experience any challenges as part of your role? If so, what were they?**

An initial challenge was settling into this new professional environment, because while I have been part of governance committees before they were student led and not run as a charity. Therefore, it was a matter of seeing what I could bring to the meetings, recognising that while I may not have expertise in areas like finance, I still bring a different viewpoint and set of questions that are still of value to the Board. Something that was not necessary a challenge but something

new that I had to navigate was understanding what the strategy is of the Union, and how it was before, so that in meetings I know what to keep in mind.

**What recommendations would you make for areas of improvement for Student Trustees in the future?**

It was mentioned during the reflection of Board as a whole, but during induction of Student Trustees perhaps more information on roles of bodies like the council, and role of stakeholders/our relationships with them could be further elaborated on. In the previous meeting when it was highlighted with different colours, that was the first time it was even brought to my attention as a first-time Trustee.

Something I would recommend to Student Trustees themselves is to take advantage of break times or other moments outside of the meeting to engage with other members of the Board because makes it easier to 'speak up' and ask questions. If you feel comfortable in your surroundings you will feel comfortable in what you have to say.