

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

Council Chair Report

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

Decision(s): To note

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

This was my second year on Board, and I must say I really appreciated the opportunity to do the role again, this time with some more know-how. I think being a trustee is a specific kind of skill that takes a while to learn and improve on, so having some experience from last year to build on was extremely valuable.

Compared to last year, I really enjoyed the fact that I was no longer an officer trustee, and hence had a bit more distance from the Union. This was useful when defining my role on Board; last year, it was often difficult to draw a line between my role on board and my role as an employee, a member of the leadership team.

Despite the Union no longer being my full-time job, I had found that I had more time to properly engage with and understand the papers this year. The mentor groups certainly helped me; thanks to useful guidance from Dan and many hours spent in pre-board discussions with him and Sam, I finally felt more empowered to understand the financial part of board papers, something I did not even know where to begin with last year.

I have felt that this year was significantly more valuable to me than last year, which convinced me to run for a third term on Board. I have learned much more about the governance side of running an organisation like ICU and felt more focused on the role of Board both during and outside of the meetings.

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

I think the biggest challenge I face with committees like Board is the amount of focus required to get through the papers and the meetings. With the paper packs being usually over 100 pages long, it requires a lot of patience to get through them all and properly understand them. This means that I often end up losing focus towards the end of the pack, or towards the end of the meetings.

I think I also still struggle to properly gauge how exactly to be a "critical friend" - I'm not always sure if my comments are relevant or if they are focusing on things that are too detailed or insignificant.

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

I think the answers to this question have very much been exhausted during the many discussions we have had on this topic this year. Some things I think would be useful include:

- More training for trustees (especially student trustees) on how to properly engage with papers, what to look for and what kind of comments / questions belong in the meetings and what should be resolved outside
- More social opportunities for student trustees to meet, or even discuss papers as a group before the meeting
- Opportunities for more external / in-depth training to improve on specific skills trustees identify gaps in