

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

Beyond Basics: Roadmap and Discussion

Author(s): Dr Tom Flynn (Managing Director)
Dr Lloyd James (Union President)

Purpose: To consider the question of what 'beyond basics' looks like in reference to the Union's current strategy.

1. Background

The Union is currently in the middle of the agreed turnaround and transformation programme, guided by the strategy 'back to basics'. Due to the phased nature of our exit from the pandemic and staff recruitment, different elements of the organisation are at different stages of this transformation. Some are delivering the basics already, whilst most are still in the midst of this development.

As agreed by the Board in May as part of the annual planning round for 2022/23, the organisation should remain focussed on delivering this plan for the next 12 months. But this does not mean we shouldn't begin to think about what comes after this plan – what 'beyond basics' might look like for Imperial College Union.

2. Projected Roadmap & Timeline

Clearly, the exact timings and dates for the strategy work will be significantly shaped by the new Senior Management Team and Officer Trustee group. However, it is expected to broadly follow the stages and timeline below.

Phase	Suggested Date(s)
<i>Research</i> : a major piece of insight work on the challenges facing Imperial College students. Possibility for this to be externally commissioned.	January - February 2023
<i>Substantive discussion and consultation</i> : looking at the issues identified by the insight work, and looking at possible solutions to these problems under the framework of the current aims.	March – April 2023
<i>Drafting and document preparation</i> : a task and finish group approach to draft, refine and road-test ideas.	May – August 2023
<i>Sign off</i> : approval of the updated strategy at both the Board and Union Council.	September - October 2023

3. Discussion Questions

With a significant number of Trustees leaving the organisation in August, it is imperative that we capture feedback on this topic now.

Breaking into the following discussion groups, please choose 2-3 of the aims (or more if you have time). Each group will be given two minutes to feed back orally. Please allocate one member of the group to summarise via email to Tom Flynn.

Looking at the text in Appendix One, what ideas have you got for us to go beyond the basics that we have set out? Consider both (i) extending the current streams of work and (ii) what other new streams might be added.

Group	Members
One	LJ, JF, NM, GM, JC
Two	DL, PP, JZ, CD, MF
Three	NP, SR, HW, DH, AC
Four	IM, DG, YY, HT, TN
Five	SL, DW, AL, JB, RS

AC	Ashley Cory	Deputy Director of Marketing & Communications
AL	Ang Li	Student Trustee-elect
CD	Charlotte Drastich	Student Trustee
DG	Dorothy Griffiths	External Trustee
DH	Dylan Hughes	DPCS-elect
DL	Daniel Lo	DPE
DW	Dan Wagner	External Trustee
GM	Gabrielle Mathews	Student Trustee
HT	Hilliam Tung	Student Trustee
HW	Hayley Wong	President-elect
IM	India Marsden	DPCS
JB	Jacques Bazile	Student Trustee
JC	Juliette Coopey	Director of Marketing & Communications
JF	Jill Finney	Chair of the Board
JZ	Jason Zheng	DPE-elect
LJ	Lloyd James	President
MF	Michaela Flegrova	Union Council Chair
NM	Niamh McAuley	DPFS-elect
NP	Nathalie Podder	DPW
PP	Phil Power	Alumni Trustee
RS	Rob Scully	Director of Finance & Resources
SL	Sam Lee	DPFS
SR	Stephen Richardson	Deputy Chair of the Board
TN	Tom Newman	Director of Membership Services
YY	Yuki Yuan	Council Chair-elect

Appendix One: Strategic Aims

For ease, the text for our aims is provided below.

1. To improve the academic and educational experience of students

It's our core charitable objective and the primary reason students are at Imperial College London – to gain a world class academic and educational experience. We need a meaningful collaboration with the College that clearly acknowledges students as partners in their education. Our core themes of this aim should include:

- i. Representing students at an institutional level, backed up by a coherent and impactful policy agenda.
- ii. Empowering elected academic representatives from across the entire institution to make positive changes in their own departments and at a faculty level. This requires high quality induction, training and continual support.
- iii. Supporting and advocating for students on a case-by-case basis, working through our Advice Centre to ensure their academic rights are protected and extended.
- iv. Supporting student groups to deliver their own academic related activities.

2. To support and enhance the wellbeing of students

Students face a wide range of wellbeing challenges during their time at Imperial, and it is crucial that the Union plays a role supporting them to tackle these. Physical and mental health, private housing and student accommodation, and the high basic cost of living associated with London – are all areas where we should have a positive impact on the lives of Imperial students. Our core themes of this aim should include:

- i. Ensuring the Union and College take a holistic approach to wellbeing, considering how all services and activities that both organisations deliver can be better aligned to support the wellbeing of students.
- ii. Supporting and advocating for students on a case-by-case basis through our Advice Centre and acting as signpost to other support services within the College and wider community.
- iii. Representing students and supporting elected student leaders to make positive changes to policies and practices across the institution.

3. To strengthen and help create active and inclusive student communities

A key element of a positive student experience at Imperial involves building connections with other students and staff around shared interests, experiences and identities. Our spaces, services and activities should support students to come together, and we should be clear and proactive in our approach to ensuring they do so in an inclusive manner. Our core themes of this aim should include:

- i. Supporting students to develop academic related communities through their departmental societies, associated student groups and constituent unions.
- ii. Supporting students to engage with and lead clubs, societies and projects based around common interests, activities and events.
- iii. Working with the College to enhance community building within halls of residence, supporting students in their transition to Imperial.

4. To empower students to change the world around them

Time spent studying at Imperial College should be transformative. It should inspire and drive students to look at how things could be, rather than how they are. The Union should amplify the voices of students and support them in driving change and making the world around them a better place: in the Union, in the College, in the local area and beyond. Our core themes of this aim should include:

- i. Providing a wide range of well supported volunteer leadership roles within the Union that give students from all areas of the College the opportunity to take responsibility for improving their own experience.
- ii. Supporting students and student groups to volunteer within the local community, providing training, support and links with other external organisations.
- iii. Creating a supportive environment for students to debate, discuss and make decisions on important issues, enabling a wide range of values and different points of views to be considered.

5. To challenge and reduce inequalities affecting students

The experience at Imperial is not equal. Sections of our student population are disadvantaged on the basis of who they are and where they come from. There is significant and important work to do in order to close these experience and outcome gaps. Our core themes of this aim should include:

- i. Proactively seeking the voices of underrepresented students, enabling different mechanisms for different communities to be engaged, supported and input into the work of the Union and the College.
- ii. Empowering students to fight for structural change that tackles the root causes of inequality that exist across the institution.
- iii. Leading culture change by championing different ways of life within the student population, celebrating this diversity and supporting students to tackle discrimination wherever they see it.

6. To enable students to have fun

The academic programme at Imperial is rigorous, and there are high expectations placed on students by both the College and by themselves. A good work life balance is essential. Students should enjoy interacting with the Union, and we should provide opportunities for students to create great memories and enable them to enjoy their time at university. Our core themes of this aim should include:

- i. Providing high quality venues (and services within them) that enable students to socialise in a safe, welcoming environment that is tailored to their specific needs.
- ii. Delivering a diverse events programme that is shaped by students and recognises key moments of celebration within the student journey.
- iii. Supporting students and student groups to run their own activities and events.

7. To facilitate the personal and professional development of students

The co- and extracurricular activities associated with studying at Imperial provide students with significant opportunities to develop their skills independently. Getting involved in the Union – on a voluntary or paid basis – should be a major component of this. Our core themes of this aim should include:

- i. Ensuring all our leadership opportunities clearly articulate how they can support the personal and professional development of students, and how this might relate to employment or further study.
- ii. Celebrating and rewarding the achievements of students and student groups, giving them recognition for their development.
- iii. Prioritising students in all our employment opportunities where possible, putting money back into their pockets, and creating substantive roles that are well managed and make them partners in the delivery of our services and activities.
- iv. Working in partnership with the College to enhance the personal and professional development opportunities they offer.