

**Imperial College Union
Governance & Identity Board / Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday 8 February 2022
4pm / Remote via Microsoft Teams

Present

Lloyd James, Union President (LJ)	Hayley Wong, CGCU President (HW)
Michaela Flegrova, Council Chair (MF)	Alex Auyung, Silwood Chair (AA)
Allan Lee, CGCU Treasurer (AL)	Samuel Hammond, ICSMSU President (SH)
Jasmine Crocker, RSMU President (JC)	Stefano Fiocca, Council Rep (SF)
Hilliam Tung, Council Rep (HT)	Trinity Stenhouse, RCSU VPO (TS)
Aparna Pillai, RCSU President (AP)	

In attendance

Tom Flynn, Managing Director (TF)
Tom Newman, Director of Membership Services (TN)
Clem Jones, Governance & Democracy Coordinator (CJ)

1. Welcome and Introductions

LJ welcomed all members to the meeting and introduced TF and TN, who he explained were in attendance to discuss how ICU can better support its Constituent Unions.

2. Apologies for Absence

CJ noted apologies from Thomas Burns (RSMU Honorary Secretary).

LJ noted MF would join the meeting slightly late.

3. Confirmation of the Previous Meeting

LJ noted confirmed that the previous meeting had occurred on 25 November 2021.

4. Support for CUs

LJ invited TF to provide context to the discussion. TF noted that, as part of its long-term transformation, ICU is now looking at areas that the Union doesn't currently have a very good understanding of, in order to determine what the Union's strategic ambitions should be in these areas. TF explained that the aim of the discussion is to get an idea of what CUs do on a daily basis, in order to: discover what support the Union can give CUs; determine where this support can be located within the staff team; and to make CU exec roles more successful and for CUs to ultimately be supported to be even more effective.

TN facilitated a discussion on the following four areas:

Main Responsibilities of CU Presidents/Exec

- Manage a committee of people, liaising with the Union, Faculty and DepSocs (CGCU)
- Ensure a good handover of skills and knowledge between years (CGCU)
- As Treasurer, advise and monitor transactions of the CU; provide HR and FR assistance to the CUs clubs and societies (CGCU)
- Ensuring that the responsibilities of the committee positions are met (RCSU)
 - 'Volunteer management' as President
 - Quality Assurance (reputation of CU; trying to keep the CU relevant)
 - Being responsible for any work left unfinished or completed incorrectly

- Attending relevant meetings that concern operations of the CU (RCSU)
- Training new volunteers about what the objectives and operations of the CU are normally like outside of the Coronavirus Pandemic (RCSU)
- As VP Operations, manage operations branch i.e. science challenge, broadsheet, sponsorship (RCSU)
- Being the 'fire extinguisher' for 'fires' that happen throughout the year (ICSMSU)
- Overseeing our 4 main streams activities (CSPs, Ents, Academics & Welfare); interface between FoM & ICSM students ; interface between ICU & ICSMSU (ICSMSU)
- Advocating for students views and needs/individual welfare case management (ICSMSU)
- Interface between central Union and students at Silwood (Silwood)
- Try to get department to pay for things (Silwood)

A discussion ensued about how CUs (and by extension their committees) can be subject to hate online and the impact this has on the mental health of Exec members. TF noted the intention to have individual conversations 1/1 or 2/1 to discuss how the Union can offer support to and understand exec members' vision for their CUs.

What Works Well?

- The level of autonomy given to manage clubs, committee, events, faculty relationships etc. (CGCU)
- Receiving a lot of faculty funding giving a lot of room to organise events (RCSU)
- A lot of committed volunteers who go above and beyond the role expectations (CGCU and RCSU)
- Ability to be largely self-sufficient; well-established traditions (ICSMSU)
- High levels of independence in committee (Silwood)
- High engagement from students (Silwood)

What Works Less Well?

- The level of support from the union depends on how friendly you are with the Officer Trustees (anonymous)
- Union processes being a large bottleneck e.g claims, POs, contracts, meaning having to 'find hacks' around the system (CGCU)
- Need more open communication to build a better community (RCSU)
- Not a great feedback process from general students in place (RCSU)
- No money from department, not enough funding from Union (Silwood)
- Poor committee structure and election type for multiple years (Silwood)
- Waiting for the union to respond for things that we should be able to do ourselves (Silwood)
- Zero oversight/understanding of Silwood (Silwood)

What Does Good Support/Training Look Like?

- Consistent stable communication and assistance throughout the year (CGCU)
- Initial training but also follow-ups/point of contact (AP)
- Management training on how to support volunteers and manage a committee
- VAT things/checkpoints in with Volunteers
- ICU could collaborate with CUs on training

LJ and TF concluded the discussion by agreeing to meet to discuss how best to book in individual meetings with CU Presidents, noting that the outcome of this discussion would be a document about CUs and how to support them better.

TF noted the College's planned expansion of the Business School presents an additional challenge and noted that being able to support such student representation will require further resourcing.

5. CU Merchandise

LJ noted that the inclusion of agenda item had been prompted by a request from College Alumni Relations for an ICU Colours Tie. LJ noted that CU merchandise might be something that ICU could support CUs in further and invited TF to comment. TF identified that CUs may have different needs in this area and suggested that some may wish run merchandise orders, sales and requests in order for merchandise to act as a surplus generator for CUs (for funding other activities), as presently. TF alternatively suggested that there may be some categories of merchandise that may feel more burdensome to CUs, in that they are culturally important (e.g. ties) but are not in high demand in a given academic year. TF proposed that it may be possible for the Union Shop to assist in managing supplier relations and sales for these items if this was desired.

- i. JC asked a question about how this might be operationalised in terms of merchandise storage and the cost of staff time etc. AL also asked if such an arrangement would apply to all CUs. TF noted that the Director of Finance & Resources would be responsible for considering these details if this approach was of interest to CUs.
- ii. AP noted that CU [brand] identity is an important aspect of merchandise and should be retained in any instance. TF agreed on this point.
- iii. AA asked about non-South Kensington sales of merchandise. TF noted that ICU is currently undertaking a Commercial Review which includes reviewing the Union's online shop provision and highlighted an aspiration for online merchandise options to match what is available on campus.

TF concluded by recommending that structured data collection be undertaken so that a proposal can be drawn up on for CUs to subsequently provide feedback on.

6. Update on Democratic Structures Review (DSR)

LJ noted that the DSR was progressing, and that the Working Group had formed a survey for council members and a survey for council subcommittee members, which has been circulated. LJ encouraged members to complete the survey as soon as possible so that the feedback can be analysed.

7. Tankards

LJ noted that he had been informed of some inactive tankards to be removed from the Union Bar and will arrange for these to be removed.

LJ further noted he needs to be told who the Tie Club Presidents are so he can contact them to ask them to pick up their tankards

8. AOB

LJ to bring a Mike the Micrometer paper to next meeting.