

Imperial College Union
Board of Trustees / November 2023

Managing Director Update

Author(s): Tom Newman (Managing Director)

Purpose: To report on the work of the Managing Director since the last Board meeting and provide an update on upcoming projects.

1. Key Projects / Work Delivered

Alongside the work contained in the Board papers, updates on key work and projects linked to delivering the organisations and my personal objectives are below.

- i. OT Support. We have delivered sessions in conjunction with the Business School for the Officers' Certificate in Student Leadership. Thank you to Dot and Stephen for support in the delivery. An important part of OT support is having the right staff vacancies filled, in January we should have two key roles, the Advice Manager and Representation Manager, in place to better support the OTs in the delivery of their objectives.
- ii. Annual planning and budgeting rounds: This has been the first year the new process for operational and budget planning has occurred. Operational plans and budgets are now complete for 2023/24 and Management Committee reviewed all plans on 12 September. Team level balanced score cards have also been developed and are being worked towards. We have a draft 2024/25 budget timetable that is linked to the block grant negotiation timeframe with College, the operational plan and team level balanced scorecards.
- iii. High Performing SMT. We have sought the services of Blue Edge, an external training provider, to deliver coaching and mentoring support to SMT. This includes focused work on the shared SMT goal of becoming a high performing team and delivering the strategy. The Operational Management Group will also be invested in with support for this group to complete ILM level 5 in leadership and management in early 2024 by the same training provider, with SMT supporting in the delivery. Importantly this sees an investment in all leaders (OTs, SMT and Operational Managers) in a strategic way this year which I hope will support the upskilling of the organisation.
- iv. Strategy Implementation. Camille and I presented the strategy at the University Management Board (University Executive Management Group), there was broad support for the strategy. The designed final version of the document is now complete as well as a version condensed to one page. Both documents will be shared with the Board.
- v. Board subcommittees: Since the Board last met we have held the second Finance, Audit and Risk committee in October. We have previously mooted the potential to have a subcommittee of the board related to People and HR. Over the course of the People and Culture plan development it has become apparent that the organisation would benefit from an executive level committee rather than a board subcommittee. We are open to feedback on this.
- vi. Funding: The Union's current block grant agreement with the College was agreed for the academic years 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24. A multi-year agreement has worked well,

enabling certainty for core activity and the new funding model also has been a significant benefit to our ability to deliver the core work. We are now undertaking the work collaboratively with the College to negotiate the next block grant agreement. The plan will be to negotiate a multi-year agreement linked to the strategy delivery. It is likely we will ask for an increase in funding to allow us to focus on priority areas in Activities, Representation and Advice. Feed in to the organisation priorities from the Board is welcomed and we have reserved time in the block grant timetable paper for this feedback to be captured. Management Committee and a meeting with the relevant senior College stakeholders will already have occurred to gain initial feedback from these groups to funding priorities. A business case will be submitted and agreed with the College in February 2024.

- vii. White City: The officers and SMT have been engaged in ensuring the Union is involved appropriately in the College's planned White City expansion. It was raised at the previous Finance Audit and Risk Committee to update on our involvement. The Union alongside the White City Programme Director have established the Imperial College & Imperial College Union Student Engagement Group. The terms of reference for this group are included in the appendix. We will also be jointly commissioning a research work to develop a firm understanding of what a great student experience should look like at White City in 2030. We should be working to a similar footprint in terms of space and services at White City and South Kensington, but should allow the detail to be shaped by the outcomes related to student consultation.
- viii. Building Works: The flooring in UDH and AS1/2 remains an issue, high impact activity will have to be relocated in term 2 and 3. This highlights the need for our building to be purpose built for the activities we intend to use it for. A short-term fix will likely be found for the remainder of the year for affected activities but a longer-term solution must be developed. Not having appropriate space risks core and commercial activity significantly.
Rob and Ashley have been working on developing the building management plan. This project is in response to the access and security issues highlighted in the confidential report supplied to the Board in July. We are now at the stage where the works required have been scoped and funding is now required which will be a combination of Union reserve and College funding. This level of detail is currently being worked on.
For longer term investment to refurbish and transform Beit, we have had positive news that the Union is included in the College's capital funding. £100k of capital funding is budgeted for 2024/25, and then £500k per annum. We secured funding for feasibility work to support the development of a Union space masterplan to ensure this funding is spent strategically.

2. College, Sector and other Updates

The College has delayed its strategy launch to March 2024. We understand this delay is to allow for further consultation of the community prior to the strategy launch. This will coincide with a rebranding project launch for the College which Camille and Rob has been heavily involved with, particularly to ensure the Union is positioned to deliver the expected and required support for the physical brand launch via our clothing range.

The ongoing situation in Gaza has been a challenging time for the Imperial College community. It has impacted many of our members in a personal way directly or indirectly and has resulted in a need for support for students that we would not have foreseen at the start of the academic year. The Officers

released a [statement](#) regarding support for our community on 13th October. On 7th November, Union Council debated and agreed a motion that has resulted in a [statement](#) on behalf of Union Council published on 17 November.

The Union and College have had to balance supporting the community during this challenging time with our legal duty in upholding and promoting all of our community's right to freedom of speech. The College has enacted its incident response, with the bronze group meeting weekly. Cat Turhan, Lucy Brown (Activities Manager) and myself have been members of this group since its inception. Our intention is to ensure the Union is supporting students, and ensuring the Union is acting lawfully whilst continuing to support trustees to protect our reputation. We will continue to engage proactively in this group.

3. MD Objectives 2023/24

As well as 'overall delivery of the Union's strategy', six areas have been identified for particular focus this academic year for myself:

Objective Description	Example Actions Required	Strategic Alignment
High Performing SMT	TN to write and implement a development plan for SMT, based on organisational and individual development needs. TN to clarify SMT objectives. TN to source executive coaching for SMT members to deliver objectives.	Enabler: A positive, equitable, and collaborative working culture for high performing staff
Support for Officer Trustees	TN to deliver the ICL Certificate in Student Leaders in collaboration with Dot and the Business School. TN to formulate and establish an ongoing development offer for OTs including regular 121 and group meetings.	Goal: Effective Advocacy and Influence Enabler: A positive, equitable, and collaborative working culture for high performing staff
Stakeholders	TN to develop a College stakeholder plan. TN to meet regularly with relevant stakeholders including trustees and College staff.	Enabler: A future-focused relationship with the College
Strategy Implementation Year One	TN to define the implementation plan and roadmap for year 1/3/5. TN to define KPIs and Balanced Score Cards at an organisation and team level.	All
Funding	TN to lead the Union submission for renegotiated business case to support strategy delivery.	Enabler: Sustainable, ethical resources and infrastructure
Capital Funding	TN to develop a capital funding approach and plan to support the transformation of Beit Building and ensure appropriate space at White City.	Enabler: Sustainable, ethical resources and infrastructure

Appendix One: **Imperial College & Imperial College Union Student Engagement Group Terms of Reference** Imperial College London White City & Hammersmith Programme

The Imperial College Union & Imperial College London White City and Hammersmith Student engagement group is responsible for ensuring that the White City development programme appropriately considers the needs and input of students across the organisation in designing a new campus that is **for and of Imperial**.

The group will be split into two distinct sections [DISTINCTION TBC];

- 1) A core group consisting of representatives from Imperial College Union (ICU), the ICU extended network, Imperial College Student facing colleagues and ICU staff.
- 2) A broader range of students and student-facing staff that will be engaged on a range of critical issues.

Objective

Together, the groups will support the development of a use case for White City Campus, and the operational models needed for successful student learning, experience and outcomes, taking into account student support, representation and outcomes. We will develop ideas, test concepts and assess project outputs in support of the programme objectives, with the ability to flex to support the objectives of ICU and the College.

Purpose

The group will engage with a wide range of stakeholders from across the College to design services and spaces in support of our objectives. These will take into account the range of courses, programmes, mixture of staff and students, as well as the teaching and research needs of the campus and College.

Reporting to the White City Campus Working Group (or alternative) the group will inform the building design and operation, the delivery of which will be overseen by the Academic Strategy Group and Operations and Infrastructure Committee in the context of the White City campus and activities.

Terms of Reference

- To consider that both academically driven and construction plans for White City have taken into account the needs of the entire student population at Imperial College.
- To ensure that students are represented across every dimension of the White City Programme.
- To ensure the design and operational models implemented at White City accounts for the needs of students now and into the future
- To consult with a wide range of stakeholders to gather ideas on Imperial College student requirements, taking into account the needs of various courses, programmes, numbers of staff and students, digital learning, as well as the overall teaching, research and collaboration needs for those who will occupy the space.
- To support creative thought on facilities and amenities at the White City Campus.
- To consult on and support the development of a comprehensive plan of the space requirements for consideration for White City.

Membership: Group 1

- ICU President (Co-Chair)
- White City Programme Director (Co-Chair)

- ICU Managing Director (or nominee)
- ICU Officer Position
- ICU Officer Position
- ICU Staff Position
- Student rep x3
- Student facing staff x3

Broader Engagement:

We will employ existing and new methods to engage with students and student facing staff on a range of critical issues. The below constitutes the framework for student engagement:

- Utilising existing fora of engaged students for qualitative input to the programme
- Digital engagement with 'hard-to-hear' students
- Research and analysis of how students at Imperial might experience Higher Education in 2028 based on current trends, applicant expectations, and global best practice

Existing Fora (by July 2023)	Digital Engagement (by July 2024)	Research and Analysis (by December 2024)
Union Council	All-student survey	Work with the Centre for Higher Education Research (CHERs) to understand existing trends in student experience
Taught Academic Representation Forum (TARF) Research Academic Representation Forum (RARF)	Work with registry to invite students to participate in an incentivised interview/take a more detailed survey based on characteristics	Site visits to UK and other, similar international campuses to understand how the student experience compares
Community and Welfare Forum (CWF) Focus group with Liberation Officers	Conduct focus groups on particular facilities and requirements	Synthesise current sector trends into a research paper
Club and Society Project Board (CSPB) Survey of Ethos users	Identify and interview student-facing staff	Survey to applicants on what their expectations/needs are for study at Imperial