

**Imperial College Union  
Board of Trustees / February 2024**

**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.

Decision(s): To note

### **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. Enabling Plan. Work has been progressing on the Enabling Plan. This is a crucial workstream for the realisation of the strategy and we now have a clear roadmap for the component parts to be delivered. Key pieces of work have included implementing the organisational restructure approved at the November Board, completing the EDI and People and Culture Plans. Ashley and Rob have been excellent in ensuring the organisational restructure was implemented on time and with the support of impacted team members. We are now recruiting the necessary roles including the Head of Marketing and Digital.
- ii. People and Culture. This was developed by Ashley Cory and the People & Culture Team, approved at the previous Board. All staff have been presented the plan, with helpful feedback provided. We are now implementing the plan and progressing key initiatives. Our 2024 people and culture survey is now open for all staff, the results will provide good measures for the plan as well as further understanding of where and how the Union can develop. The organisational restructure implemented included slightly changing the roles and emphasis of this team (eg Internal Comms Manager is now People and Culture Manager), which will result in a clearer brief and identity across the organisation.
- iii. Democracy and Corporate Governance Review. This is included as a separate item for the Board to consider. Both our corporate governance and democracy are out dated, and it is good practice to review. This will form a substantive project that I will be working to deliver, and is one that is crucial to underpinning the Union's success. It is imperative we have the right corporate structure that allows for us to achieve our mission, manages our risk and maximises our ability to fund our core activities. The College have stressed the value in the Union being an effective representation of the student voice, it is crucial our democratic structures enable the Union to do this. We will undertake desk research to initially assess options and then likely source the services of external expertise to implement. Full details on the plan are provided in the associated item.
- iv. OT Support. We have delivered 4 out of the 6 executive education sessions for the Officer training. Our next sessions are in March, we will review the programme to inform developments for the 2024/25 Officer cohort. An Officer Ways of Working document has been produced to support Officers to be more effective. This includes guidance on basic HR functions, better meeting support and a new Officer/SMT coaching and mentoring arrangement.

- v. Annual planning and budgeting rounds. The Board agreed to the planning timeframes in November, we are now working to these. The Union block grant submission was submitted to the College at the end of January. We are happy to share the business case separately for information. We have had the first negotiation meeting, where we were asked to prioritise the requests for new activity. We will have a further meeting with the College CFO where we hope to agree the 2024/25 & 2025/26 funding arrangement.
- vi. High Performing SMT. We have since November 2023 undertaken individual and team executive coaching and mentoring. We have had 2 sessions of individual coaching sessions, and a team session facilitated by an external coach. The SMT coaching goals are centred on supporting SMT to become a high performing team, and how to deliver the strategic plan. We have already utilised this support to overhaul SMT meetings, and focus on bigger priorities in a more focused way including managing the building.
- vii. Board subcommittees: Since the Board last met we have held the third Finance, Audit and Risk committee in January. This included significant work from Christian Cooper with a review of CSP funding and its efficiency. I think this has led to recommendations that when implemented will result in better support for student groups, more assurance that financial risks are being mitigated and Officer Trustees able to spend less time on operational tasks. I think we will need to undertake further future work on what grant is actually spent on and what impact it has on our members to ensure we are assured that this funding is being maximised.
- viii. Funding. The Union block grant request was submitted to the College in January using feedback from the Board and Management Committee. We hope to have confirmation of funding arrangement in March 2024.
- ix. Sport. The reviewing of the operational delivery of sport remains a perennial undertaking. However, this review feels substantive not just in the volume of work being undertaken but the impact it will have. It is likely we will have a mutually agreeable (Union and Move Imperial) model of sport delivery and membership model for 2024/25 that results in a more efficient operation and better experience for students. I have been involved in the working group led by Christian and Cat.
- x. White City. The White City Student Engagement group has met twice since the November Board which I am a member of alongside all Officer Trustees. We have been able to influence the building developments under the West Way and are being consulted on our requirements. The Union have been asked to provide a more detailed 'operating model' for White City, I will lead this development. This will link to a broader multi campus plan for the Union. Officers, Cat and myself attended the 'Future White City Student' working group and we were able to influence quite heavily the future strategy for White City.

I have been asked to co chair the Imperial College & Imperial College Union Sport, Activity and Wellbeing Strategy Working Group. This is primarily focused on the facilities development for these activities at White City and the DPCS is also a member. Alongside Officers and College colleagues we are advocating for further investigation to invest in transformational facilities for sport and activity at White City. Whilst it is imperative student officers provide the Union voice, there is a need for continuity in these groups which I will provide.

- xi. Building Works. I am working with the Interim Director of Estates and Major Projects to commission a feasibility study for Union space. This will aim to provide a space masterplan for the Union building at South Kensington, but more importantly a joint understanding for ICU and Estates on what students want and need from Union and extra curricular spaces across Imperial. I will have had the initial planning meeting for this project before the Board meeting.

**2. College, Sector and other Updates**

The Union continues to engage fully with the College’s response to the ongoing middle eastern conflict. Cat Turhan, Lucy Brown (Student Activities Manager) and myself are members of the College’s bronze response group, with Cat and myself also attending Silver group meetings. We will continue to engage, being mindful of our duties under the law with regards to both Freedom of Speech and the Equalities Act, and our role to ensure compliance with the Union and the College’s own behaviour codes of conduct and values.

Our new Policy and Research Coordinator is actively supporting the Officers and SMT to be kept up to date with ongoing developments related to the implementation of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023. We are engaging with the Office for Students current consultation of Students’ Unions and will be submitting a response. We are primarily concerned with the potential additional administration burden that may be placed on student events to remain compliant with new legislation. There will be a heightened risk with regards to compliance with this legislation that should be reflected in the strategic risk register and mitigating actions will be included in 2024/25 operating plans. Until the Office for Students guidance is confirmed and released it is not yet possible to undertake this work. We have included additional resource request in the block grant submission and continue to work with College as part of the project group tasked with institutional compliance in this area.

**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:

<b>Objective Description</b>	<b>Example Actions Required</b>	<b>Strategic Alignment</b>
<b>High Performing SMT</b>	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: <b>A positive, equitable, and collaborative working culture for high performing staff</b>
<b>Support for Sabbatical Officers</b>	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: <b>Effective Advocacy and Influence</b> Enabler: <b>A positive, equitable, and collaborative working culture for high performing staff</b>
<b>Stakeholders</b>	TN to develop a College stakeholder plan. TN to meet regularly with relevant stakeholders including trustees and College staff.	Enabler: <b>A future-focused relationship with the College</b>

<b>Strategy Implementation Year One</b>	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
<b>Funding</b>	TN to lead the Union submission for renegotiated business case to support strategy delivery.	Enabler: <b>Sustainable, ethical resources and infrastructure</b>
<b>Capital Funding</b>	TN to develop a capital funding approach and plan to support the transformation of Beit Building and ensure appropriate space at White City.	Enabler: <b>Sustainable, ethical resources and infrastructure</b>