

1 Trustees Present

Stephen Richardson	(SR)	Lay Trustee (Chair of the Board of Trustees)
Dorothy Griffiths	(DG)	Lay Trustee
Daniel Wagner	(DW)	Lay Trustee
Genevieve Landricombe	(GL)	Lay Trustee
Jane Coulson	(JC)	Lay Trustee
Phil Power	(PP)	Alumni Trustee
Camille Boutrolle	(CB)	Officer Trustee (Union President)
Christian Cooper	(CC)	Officer Trustee (Deputy President Clubs & Societies)
Andreea Cojocea	(AnC)	Officer Trustee (Deputy President Welfare)
Stephanie Yeung	(SY)	Officer Trustee (Deputy President Finance & Services)
Yi Yang	(YY)	Officer Trustee (Deputy President Education)
Nathalie Podder	(NP)	Student Trustee
Thomas Fernandez Debets	(TFD)	Student Trustee
Christian Oldfield	(CO)	Student Trustee
Dylan Hughes	(DH)	Student Trustee
Anthea MacIntosh-LaRocque	(AML)	Union Council Chair

Staff In Attendance

Tom Newman	(TN)	Managing Director
Peter Greaney	(PG)	External Director of Finance
Cat Turhan	(CT)	Director of Membership Services
Rob Pegg	(RP)	Director of Commercial Services
Ashley Cory	(AC)	Director of Support Services
Clem Jones	(CJ)	Governance & Executive Manager

2 Apologies

None to note as all trustees and staff in attendance at Board meetings were present.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 28 February 2024

DG raised that the answer given to the question at the last meeting about the Reynolds refurbishment was not satisfactory. TN noted that reflections on the refurbishment is on the agenda for the next Finance, Audit & Risk meeting in June.

*The draft minutes of the previous meeting were **approved** as an accurate record of proceedings.*

4 Matters Arising

Noted the development of a Building Management Plan is in progress; a first draft has been produced but needs to be socialised with operational managers.

*Board **noted** the matters arising from previous meetings that were not elsewhere covered on the agenda.*

5 Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

Noted that student/officer trustees eligible and interested in applying to be the Second Student Member of College Council for 2024-25 may have a perceived or real interest in Item 16 (Student Trustee Appointments), inasmuch as the proposed student trustee appointees would also be eligible to apply for the College Council position. **Agreed** all would remain present for this item.

Board **noted** the declarations of conflicts of interest relating to agenda items.

6 Identification of Confidential Business

Board **identified** the following aspects as confidential to the Board:

- The tender submission/information contained in paper TB/23-24/49 under Item 10 (Sound and Lighting Tender) as commercially sensitive.
- Paper TB/23-24/51 under Item 12 (Student Experience Fund Report) is presented as a draft report and minor changes may be made prior to wider publication.
- The CVs contained in paper TB/23-24/54 under Item 16 (Student Trustee Appointment) contains personal contact details and should not be published.
- Paper TB/23-24/55 under Item 17 (Managing Director Update) contains some confidential information which will be redacted from the copy published online.

Action:
CC liaise
CJ over
web
version
of
SEF
report

7 Board Sub-Committees Update

TN, DW and PP presented paper TB/23-24/46.

TN highlighted that a People & Culture Committee has been established as a sub-committee of Management Committee and has its own Terms of Reference for driving forward the Union's People and Culture plan.

DW highlighted that Finance, Audit & Risk approved the annual casual staff pay review, and that a Committee Effectiveness Review has taken place resulting in recommendations which will be taken forward.

PP noted Governance & Membership had not been required to meet since the last meeting, but thanked all involved in the Leadership Elections for their hard work.

- i. GL about staff capacity for running these committees. TN noted that CJ is currently supporting but funding for an executive assistant for Governance has been requested as part of the block grant request process.

Board **noted** the update.

8 April Management Accounts

PG presented paper TB/23-24/47.

- i. CO asked why management accounts presented over the last nine months have consistently reported a higher rate of staff vacancy savings than assumed. PG noted this year has been an outlier with a vacancy saving rate upwards of 6-7%, compared to a historic vacancy rate of 3-4%. PG further noted there had been some delays this year, but all vacancies are in the process of being filled, and that the proposed 2024-2025 budgeting assumption is a 2.5% vacancy savings rate.
- ii. GL asked whether ICU's staff salaries are attractive enough, and asked about benchmarking. TN noted the Union would like to invest some of its Strategic Investment Fund towards a relatively small benchmarking exercise, with a working hypothesis that some roles may not be salaried correctly at present. TN welcomed thoughts from the Board on how frequently a benchmarking exercise should take place, noting that the College typically undertake one with a KPI to be in the top quartile of the sector.

- iii. CC noted he had raised at Finance, Audit & Risk that the reforecasted surplus of £1k seemed quite tight, and that the response at the time had been that this was a conservative estimate. RP noted that there is always a considerable risk of a downturn, and that a downturn had been planned for in Retail given the uncertainty around popularity of rebranded stock but, in the event, Retail saw an upturn. DW noted that the performance is a considerable (positive) variance from the February reforecast. DW further noted that as part of budgeting the Union needs to look at what stabilised revenue/profits can be relied upon.
- iv. DW noted there had been some discussion earlier in the year about underspend in IC Trust lines, of which the Union could offer to return £100k to the Trust (as these are restricted funds). It was also noted that a favourable situation could be if the Trust offers that the Union keep a proportion and allows the Union to reallocate the funds.

Board noted the April Management Accounts.

9 Budget Principles 2024-2025

PG presented paper TB/23-24/48.

- i. SR asked if there were any budgeting assumptions that were significantly different to last year. PG noted that one of the detailed budgeting assumptions is an inflationary uplift request equating to 4% (37k) from FY24/25, whereas no centralised assumption was included last year.
- ii. DW noted TB/23-24/48 states that the Union will only proceed with particular standalone activities as outlined under Category B and C Block Grant Request options *if* the College accommodates the request to fund these activities. DW commented that these appear to be meaningful activities that the Union should be doing, and asked whether they were therefore contingent on the College meeting the corresponding Block Grant Request. PG noted that they are largely contingent, but there may be alternative opportunities which the Union could look at. SR noted that when Board comes to discuss the budget in July it would be helpful to have more detail on what the activities envisaged under scenarios B and C are.
- iii. PP asked if the College had indicated by when they would respond to the Block Grant Request. TN noted colleagues had indicated they would respond by the end of May 2024.

Board approved the budget principles and timeline.

10 Sound and Lighting Tender

RP presented paper TB/23-24/49.

- i. CC voiced support for the proposal, noting that from a student perspective the proposal still allows students to be involved in the Union's lighting and sound provision and to get industry training. JC also noted that colleagues in industry had spoken highly of the proposed supplier.
- ii. AML asked if there had been any student consultation e.g., with student groups who may be affected by the equipment change. RP noted the matter had been discussed with the DramSoc Technical Director.
- iii. CB asked what would be done with the existing technical equipment. RP noted that as part of the derig the pieces would be valued and could potentially be sold depending on the value.
- iv. CO, noting that the contract will include the maintenance of tech at Reynolds, asked if regular users of existing equipment at various Union

spaces will know how to use the new equipment. RP noted that the set up of the new equipment will be purpose-built with student users in mind. DG asked if student users would be receive training in time for Welcome. RP confirmed that they would.

Board approved the request to proceed with a contract commitment exceeding £50k for the supply/maintenance of sound and lighting in Union venues by an external company.

11 Strategy Monitoring & Evaluation

CT presented paper TB/23-24/50.

- i. NP suggested the data from the Student Experience Fund could be another available tool in measuring the KPI of a 25% increase in engagement in Union events and student groups by students from underrepresented groups.
- ii. DG suggested that the KPI to transform union spaces by 2026 at Beit and by 2028 at White City is quite vague and asked how the Union measures that transformation. TN noted that this KPI was kept purposefully broad at the time of the Strategic Plan's approval, noting that AC is now in a place to begin leading the Building Management Plan work regarding transformation of Union spaces in South Kensington.
- iii. JC noted that student awareness of the Union was discussed as being an important KPI at the last Board meeting, and therefore suggested it would be important to include in the ICU student survey questions such as whether students were aware of the Student Experience Fund, for example.
- iv. TFD noted, regarding use of the National Student Survey to measure the KPI of 75% of students agreeing that the Students' Union represents students' academic interests, that the NSS only surveys undergraduate students; TFD suggested measuring data from postgraduate students as well such as through the PTES and PRES survey.
- v. DH asked whether the KPI percentages might change during the lifetime of the 2023-28 Strategic Plan. TN suggested that the balanced scorecard should be reviewed by Board annually, with the KPI target percentages being adapted up or down accordingly for the following year.

Action:
CJ check
BSC
review is
on
calendar

Board noted the proposed approach to monitoring and evaluating the Union's performance against the measures and targets in the balanced scorecard section of the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan.

12 Student Experience Fund Report

CC presented paper TB/23-24/51, highlighting that almost 40% of eligible students have claimed all or part of their available balance.

- i. GL highlighted the higher financial risk associated with allowing students to self-declare as opposed to assigning the Fund to bursary recipients. CC suggested an amount could be ringfenced for bursary students.
- ii. GL queried whether non-bursary UK UG students could access the Fund via self-declaration. CC clarified that this would be the intention.
- iii. CO suggested that a long-term aim should be that postgraduate access to the fund should not be restricted to by application only, as this risks the Union losing out on engagement from groups of students that it wishes to target through via the Fund.

- iv. TFD noted that it would be useful to see a breakdown by bursary tier. CC noted an update could be provided in due course.

Action:
CC to
provide
update

Board noted the report and delegated authority to Management Committee to make all decisions on the next steps of the fund expansion, with the exception of the funding request for “year 2” (2024/25 academic year) of the fund, which will come a future meeting of the Board of Trustees.

13 Staff Engagement Survey Result

AC presented paper TB/23-24/52.

- i. JC praised the areas of improvements and high scores for trust in management, noting this can often be the hardest area. JC also noted that the main area to improve seemed to be communication with staff, for example being clear about career progression, salary benchmarking etc.
- ii. TFD commented that ICU appears to be falling short in several areas compared to both the SU sector and those SUs against whom ICU has chosen to compare itself. AC noted that ICU is performing better than the Third Sector Benchmark and is roughly on par with the Whole SU Sector Benchmark but is not currently performing as well as its Peer Group Benchmark. TFD asked how ICU can live up to its comparators. TN noted that the new People and Culture subcommittee of Management Committee will drive forward implementation of the People & Culture and EDI plans. TN also noted that it will be worth looking at the College’s employee survey results. AC also noted that the Union is looking at accreditation schemes such as Investors in People.
- iii. CO queried UCL and Kings SUs not appearing in the Peer Group Benchmark. AC noted that they do not participate in this survey. CO suggested this would be important to note within the data as they may be considered comparator Unions. TN noted that ICU has been looking at potentially collaborating with QMUL, Kings and UCL SUs on a pay benchmarking exercise.
- iv. CB commented that it will be beneficial to hear the perspectives of all levels of the staffing structure who are represented on the People & Culture Committee.

Board considered the 2024 results of the 2024 Staff Engagement Survey.

14 Deputy Returning Officer Report on the Leadership Elections 2024

CT presented paper TB/23-24/53.

There has been a persistent downward voter turnout trend in the annual Leadership Election over the last five years. This year there was a marked decrease in engagement from postgraduate taught students, with their turnout down 3.5 percentage points. Sector trends suggest that this cohort tend to be less engaged as they study one-year courses and are less focussed on being involved with their Union.

There was a marked increase in the number of complaints submitted to the election complaints process this year.

- i. CC commented that last year’s lower number of complaints felt to be the anomaly and the higher number this year to be more usual. CT noted that issues arose within a specific CSP election this year, as per two years ago, suggesting there may have been particularly contentious campaigning taking place. DW asked if there are any concerns year-on-year with the

- conduct of this CSP. CT noted that the complaints received related to the nature of this year's election campaigning, rather than overall conduct.
- ii. YY asked if it is possible to know how many international students have voted in the election. CT agreed to look into this.
 - iii. AML asked why the voter turnout had decreased so much after 2019, notwithstanding the Covid19 pandemic. TFD suggested that the 2019 turnout % should be disregarded, believing that the turnout for the main leadership positions and turnout for CSP elections used to be aggregated at that point in time. TN also noted that nonetheless in-person campaigning has reduced post-pandemic. AMLR suggested that the 2019 and 2020 turnout figures be removed from the final version of the report recommended to College Council, and suggested that the results from the candidate satisfaction survey could also be used to measure the success of the election in future.
 - iv. DW noted that an interesting KPI is how contested the roles are, and posed a question on whether 138 leadership positions is right for the Union's size. DH also asked about how much was spent on the election. CT noted all of the budget was spent.

Action:
CT
check
int'n'tion'l
student
turnout

*Board agreed to **recommend** the report to College Council, subject to removing the aggregated 2019 and 2020 turnout figures for clarity.*

15 Lay Trustee Recruitment Update

SR provided a verbal update on recruitment for the upcoming Lay Trustee vacancy following DW's decision to withdraw from the reappointment process since the last Board meeting:

- Trustees Unlimited had provided a strong sifted longlist
- Six candidates were shortlisted and interviewed on 20 May
- The unanimous view of the Student Engagement Panel (consisting of a CC, CO and YY) and the Formal Interview Panel (consisting of SR, CB and the CFO of Imperial) is to appoint Nick Marley, an Imperial alumnus and chartered accountant, subject to Board and Union Council approval/ratification respectively at subsequent meetings
- The process identified two other applicants of potential future interest to the ICU Board

*Board **noted** the update.*

16 Student Trustee Appointment

CB presented paper TB/23-24/54.

*Board **approved** the proposed appointment of Amandine Beaugé and Monica Jin Yang as student trustees for 2024-2025, subject to ratification by Union Council.*

17 Managing Director Update

TN presented paper TB/23-24/55, noting the following:

- A student encampment has been established on the Queen's Lawn
- From 1 August 2024 the Office for Students will monitor and regulate how students' unions comply with new free speech duties; the Department of Education have released secondary legislation which provides the Office for Students with the ability to fine students' unions for freedom of speech duty breaches up to a maximum fine of £50,000.

- The Migration Advisory Committee has recommended that the graduate visa route remains place in its current form, due to not finding any evidence that this route is being abused; this is positive news for the Higher Education sector and its competitiveness in international student recruitment.
 - A General Election has been called for 4 July 2024. The Union will be providing educational messaging promoting voter registration and turnout, and is looking to organise a hustings event with other London SUs.
- i. DW suggested that although the Union will need to be compliant with the OfS guidance from 1 August 2024, the Union might look at its practices and procedures in advance.
 - ii. DW noted the matter-of-fact tone of the report and suggested there is a need to communicate excitement and vision for opportunities emerging for the Union regarding College developments.

Action:
CJ add
Freedom
of
Speech
to Board
business
calendar

Board noted the update.

18 Officer Trustee Update

CB presented paper TB/23-24/56, highlighting the following elements of the officer's recent work:

- CC's work on the Student Experience Fund
 - YY's work towards the recent approval of modifications to the Mutual Expectations Documents for Postgraduate Research students
 - AnC's work with CB on ICU's student submission for the College's Access and Participation Plan.
 - SY's work with TN and CB on developing a first draft of the Union Sustainability Plan.
- i. AnC noted she also recently collaborated with the College over Mental Health Awareness Week.
 - ii. SY noted she is aiming to get student feedback on the draft Union Sustainability Plan before presenting the Plan to the July Board meeting.
 - iii. YY noted she has been investigating whether the PTES survey can be sent out in Mandarin.
 - iv. CC notified the Board that he intends to stand for election to the position of BUCS Regional Chair.

Action:
CJ add
to July
agenda

Board noted the update.

19 Union Council Chair Update

AML provided a verbal update.

There have been two ordinary meetings of Union Council since the last Board meeting. At the April meeting of Union Council, a motion from the plant-based universities campaign was lost, however, there is scope that another similar motion may be presented to a future Union Council meeting. AML noted that the Representation Manager had worked with the motion authors to advise on the authority and limitations of Union Council policy, and noted that any passed policy with operational and/or financial implications would subsequently be considered by the most relevant body such as Board. SY noted she has reached out to other SUs who have passed such policies.

The most recent Union Council meeting was held online, based on feedback from members about travelling to South Kensington when the agenda is lighter.

Board noted the update.

20 Calendar of Business Update

TN presented paper TB/23-24/57.

Board noted the update.

21 AOB

TN raised a confidential item of business relating to the Summer Ball which was duly discussed and considered by the Board.

22 Trustee Discussion without staff

There was a trustee discussion without staff.

ENDS.