

Imperial College Union
Supporting Note to the Imperial College Constitution - Supporting Note
A note by Deputy President Education and Welfare

This is a bit of a '**How to make Constitutional Changes for Dummies**' document as a lot of people (myself included) have been left a little confused by the unfathomable logic and eloquent word weaving of this Constitutional Amendment's Proposer.

Why do we need to pass a new constitution?

- The last time we passed the constitution it wasn't done entirely correctly. In fact it was unconstitutional and not particularly transparent. This document doesn't present **any changes whatsoever** it just makes sure that we have a definitive working document.

Why was the last one unconstitutional?

- At the time the constitution was presented it had to be passed by **two meetings** of Union Council and one meeting of College Council.
- Between the two meetings **material changes** were made to the constitution. Council did not vote to allow these material changes and the addition of them is regarded as submitting amendments to the document.
- Some of the changes that were submitted or areas that had been deleted were not flagged to council or highlighted in the text of the second document.
- Once the document had been amended it reverted to the **first reading**.
- This was therefore only passed by one meeting of Council making it unconstitutional.

Additionally,

- The wording was changed before the Constitution was presented to College Council.
- College Council were lead to believe that the Constitution was presented **as passed** by Union Council (which wasn't true).

However,

- The change of wording isn't hugely important as it still means pretty much the same thing but may prevent some mis-interpretations of the constitution (which could potentially be made by the president who has interpretational duties).

Why do we need to pass it now?

- Constitutional changes will go to the meeting of College Council on the **11th July**.
- Any changes made to the constitution before then will be considered to be the **working constitution** until such time as the College Council rejects it (should they choose to do so).
- Amendments proposed from now on will be to the **new constitution**.
- We are going to do constitutional tidy ups and amendments next term anyway.
- This gives us more time to think about the constitution and do it properly (unlike last time).
- It also means we won't have to sit through **six hours** of boring reading line by line next term because we can deal with each change with **more care** in separate meetings over the next six months.

What decisions do we have to make today?

- To receive this constitutional amendment in **two readings** at council and one reading at the trustee board to allow for due care and attention to be taken. (This is not currently required by the constitution but would be best practice on this occasion).
- To **accept the constitution** as a first reading of the document. (Needs two thirds majority).

What happens next?

- At the next meeting of Council the document will be re-submitted for a **second reading** and if passed will become the working document up until College Council on 11th July.
- It is likely that **amendments** that have already been flagged throughout the last term may be submitted from next Council onwards.
- These amendments will need two readings also but we will not need to revisit the full text of the Constitution at any point again this year.
- This will give us plenty of time to submit further amendments to be considered on their **individual merits** as needed next term.
- The Constitution will be presented to College Council as a coherent document in a sensible format that they will have had plenty of time to consider (six months to be exact).
- We will applaud ourselves for being the first Council to take time over Constitutional Amendments and give them the due care and attention they deserve.