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Sabbatical Roles & Remits

A discussion paper by
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The Union sabbatical roles and remits (of the President and four Deputy Presidents) have been relatively unchanged for the last ten years.

In that period, the Union has grown into a very different organisation to what it was 10 years ago – we now have a turnover of £5.5M, employ 45 full time staff and are a registered charity. The external landscape has changed too: there are fees for education, the cost of living in London is rising dramatically, and the College itself has changed beyond recognition: this year teaching or supervising over 7,000 postgraduate students, and a similar number of international students. Very different to 10 years ago.

No changes were proposed to the sabbatical roles in the October Constitution & Bye-Law governance changes: arguably this is because, as a sabbatical team, we didn't know any different.

For next year, and the few years after that we want to amend the **exact** role descriptions (we think that this should – like the Constitution & Bye-Laws themselves – be reviewed every 4/5 years or so), to meet the needs of students today, not of year's gone by.

To be clear, we are not proposing removing any remits from any of the roles. We are happy (and believe) that sabbaticals in this organisation should always retain certain powers and ability to do things, even if they're not what they (going forward) are required to do day to day.

For instance, **mechanical tasks** can be delegated to staff day to day – there is no benefit or need to have a sabbatical undertake them. But the ability for a sabbatical to do them should always be maintained. An example is 'processing refunds on the Union shop'. The DPFS should always retain the ability to do refunds, but shouldn't necessarily be the one who has to do them day to day. They could be effecting more change for students in more appropriate ways.

We have looked both at ourselves, as an organisation, and elsewhere in the sector. Whilst we are fully aware that the argument “they do it, so we should” doesn't hold (all Union's are very different!) we thought drawing comparisons would at least be interesting. This is included below. We looked at institutions of a similar size to Imperial, as well as institutions that scored well in the NSS Question 23 that asks participants to rank their students' union.

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Institution	Structure												
Imperial	President	Education	Clubs & Societies	Welfare			Finance & Services			Felix			
Sheffield	President	Education	Activities	Welfare	SU Development	Sport					International	Women's	
Leeds	Union Affairs	Education	Activities	Welfare	Community								Equality & Diversity
Brunel	President	Academic Rep	Activities	Welfare & Community	Community & Development			Student Engagement					
Reading	President	Education		Welfare									
Edinburgh	President	Education	Activities				Finance & Services						
Hull	President	Education	Activities	Welfare	Community								
Bath	President	Education	Activities	Welfare & Community		Sports							
Leicester	Union Development	Academic Rep	Activities	Welfare & International	Campaigns & Involvement								
LSE	Gen Sec	Education	Activities	Welfare					PG				
Warwick	President	Education	Societies	Welfare & Campaigns	Democracy & Development	Sports			PG				
Cardiff	President	Education	Societies	Welfare	Union Development	Sports				Media			
Nottingham	President	Education	Activities	Welfare	Community	Sport	Finance & Services	Democracy & Communications	PG				
Total (13)	13	13	13	12	8	5	3	2	3	2	1	1	1

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By reviewing the remits and adding in extra responsibilities (we are not proposing removing any responsibilities) we hope to face up to certain deficiencies the Union has been dealing with the last few years. We believe the Union doesn't do enough to:

1. Support Postgraduate Students (though they are half of our Membership, roughly 80% of undergraduates interact with the Union versus 20% of postgraduates)
2. Support Volunteering (this is something widely led by other Unions around the country)
3. Support International students
4. Support students based on campuses other than South Kensington
5. Enable internationalisation amongst the student body
6. Effect liberation of minorities
7. Develop students' career opportunities
8. Campaign for fairer living costs in the capital (particularly this year, with #AgainstActon and the North Acton development, this has come into sharp focus)

As such we would like to add the following remits into the sabbatical roles:

President

Accommodation (given their place on College Council they are well placed to influence College's decisions on Accommodation matters)

Deputy President (Clubs & Societies)

Non-SK Campuses
Volunteering

Deputy President (Education)

Internationalisation

Deputy President (Finance & Services)

Student Development and Skills Development
Postgraduate Social
Volunteering Accreditation

Deputy President (Welfare)

Liberation
International students
Accommodation

DISCUSSION POINT 1: To add the remits described above into the sabbatical roles

We are keen to try and frame the sabbatical positions in the most appropriate way possible; though also keen to not pointlessly change names just 'for the sake'. By adding in careers, student development, aspects of postgraduate support and volunteering to the DPFS role – on top of finance we are wary that the name 'Finance and Services' would no longer clearly reflect what the DPFS does on a day-to-day basis.

In reality, all the sabbaticals – as trustees, and through interactions with the Commercial Services and Retail team – effect what happens in the Union's 'services' – not just the DPFS. Similarly, as Trustees, all sabbaticals are responsible and liable for the Union's financial arrangements – the

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DPFS's role specifically does the mechanical tasks related to finance. Certain elements of this need to be maintained, to ensure one sabb has specific responsibility for finance related things – for instance club finance, as currently happens – but, as other aspects of the role broaden into a role that provides for the whole **community**, the name doesn't really do the role justice.

The word 'Community' is taken to describe virtually all aspects of what the Union does: the 'College Community' refers to anything to do with students. We feel that this would more aptly describe what the DPFS role does on a day-to-day basis.

DISCUSSION POINT 2: To rename the role of Deputy President (Finance & Services) to Deputy President (Community & Development) whilst retaining the remit of DPFS, with the additions above.