

IMPERIAL COLLEGE UNION

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

11 November 2014
9.00am

- Present:** Dr Andy Heeps (Alumnus Trustee) *Chair*
Paul Beaumont (ICU Council Chair)
Abigail de Bruin (ICU Deputy President [C&S])
Hiba Saleem Danish (Student Trustee)
- Observers:** Tom Wheeler (ICU President)
Joe Cooper (ICU Managing Director)
Alex McKee (ICU Central Services Manager)
Hannah Blandford (Sport Imperial)
- In attendance:** George Cross (ICSMRFC Club Captain) (part)
Dariush Hassanzadeh-Baboli (ICSMSU President) (part)

1. The Governance Committee met at the request of the Union President to consider matters under Bye-Law E.
2. The Governance Committee considered two allegations of bringing the Union into disrepute against all or part of
 - a. Imperial College Union Rugby Football Club; and
 - b. Imperial College School of Medicine Rugby Football Club.

IMPERIAL COLLEGE UNION RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB (ICURFC)

3. The President outlined the allegation against ICURFC. On 30 October 2014 the ICURFC first team had played an away match at Teddington and were returning to the College via Richmond.
4. 15 members of the club had taken the Underground. During the journey, some members of the team began to challenge each other to 'jump-strip', which involves leaving the underground car at a stop, removing an item of clothing and getting back on. As the journey progressed, more clothes were removed.
5. Two members of ICURFC were primarily involved.
6. Eventually the train stopped at a station. The driver announced a malfunction and people were asked to leave the train. At this point, the British Transport Police were called and asked to attend, although the members of the ICURFC had left by this point.

7. The Governance Committee were informed that there are witness statements with the British Transport Police that recall full nudity from four individuals and drinking alcohol from bottles by the group of individuals. British Transport Police wish to meet with the ICURFC to take matters further.
8. At least two media outlets, the London Evening Standard and the Daily Telegraph identified the ICURFC from men wearing Imperial College Rugby Sweatshirts, and the Telegraph reports that they were “swigging from bottles of wine”.
9. The President had received a letter from Thomas Hobson, ICURFC Club Captain and James Cox, ICURFC First Team Captain.
10. Thomas Hobson met with the College Tutors on 5 November 2014. He informed the College Tutors that the club members have decided to ‘take the blame as a Club’ and not give the name of the two main perpetrators. He was present at the incident and claimed there was no nudity, and that there was no drinking on tube. Mr Hobson informed the College Tutors that he ‘cannot recall’ the names of the perpetrators.
11. The Governance Committee considered the facts. It prefers the evidence of the British Transport Police witnesses to that of the ICURFC. It was satisfied that the ICURFC brought the Union into disrepute on 30 October 2014.
12. In considering the sanction to place on ICURFC the Governance Committee took into account the level of cooperation ICURFC had given the Union in its investigation of the incident, which was limited. It considered that the evidence given to the College Tutors by the Club Captain was unhelpful, and not in keeping with witness statements provided by the British Transport Police.
13. In the light of both the letter from Mr Hobson and Mr Cox and the discrepancies between Mr Hobson’s statement to the College Tutors and the witness statements provided by the British Transport Police, the Governance Committee believe that ICURFC have not shown an understanding of the level of severity of their misconduct, and shown no mitigating circumstances.
14. Accordingly the Governance Committee imposes the following penalties:
 - a. ICURFC will be suspended for two weeks from the date of this meeting (11 November 2014)
 - b. The 22 members on the team sheet from the match of 30 October 2014 (listed at Appendix A) will be suspended from membership of ICURFC or other Union rugby teams until 31 December 2014

- c. The 22 members on the team sheet from the match of 30 October 2014 will undertake Union service, i.e. work on Union or College campuses of benefit to the College community, to be determined by the Union
 - d. A recommendation to the Union President that Thomas Hobson is subject to a motion of no confidence at Council or any other committee entitled to pass it
15. In addition, the Governance Committee expects full co-operation between ICURFC and both the British Transport Police and College procedures. Any BUCS fines will be subtracted from club accounts.
16. The Governance Committee will meet in early 2015 to review the effect of these penalties.
17. In reaching its conclusions, the Governance Committee is aware of the impact of the Club suspension on other students' participation in playing rugby in the BUCS league, and future BUCS funding. However, it believes the gravity of the situation requires a strong message to be sent that should a club seek to cover up such behavior, then the club as a whole should bear the consequences.

IMPERIAL COLLEGE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB (ICSMRFC)

18. The President outlined the allegations against ICSMRFC.
19. On 22 October 2014 the ICSMRFC third team met after a match against Royal Holloway in a side-room in the bar at Heston. It is not disputed that a game involving beer escalated to the point where individuals were drunk and Sport Imperial staff reported individuals vomiting and urinating on the terrace and urinating in the car park.
20. Following this incident, the club captain George Cross suspended social activities at Heston for the ICSMRFC third team for two months.
21. On 29 October 2014 the ICSMRFC had arranged a fixture in Birmingham and a social tour to Bristol. Prior to the day, the team had sustained injuries and the match was called off. However, the tour to Bristol went ahead.
22. As part of the 'kit list' supplied to members, a bottle of port was listed. On questioning, George Cross stated that this was suggested in order to make the purchasing of alcohol on the trip more "efficient". Prior to departing, the team had been drinking beer at the Reynolds Bar.
23. On the journey to Bristol a member of the team smashed an internal window with an emergency hammer that was hanging down from its holster. Evidence from the College Tutors and Faculty of Medicine

states that this was accidental, and at present it has been suggested that no further action is being taken against the individual involved

24. However it was apparent to the Governance Committee that drinking was taking place on the coach, and this clouded the judgment of the Club officers. They did not inform the driver of the damage to the window at the time it happened, and closed the curtains over the window. On informing the driver of the coach in Bristol, the company informed the police and required payment for the damage sustained to the coach.
25. Union Officers were informed on the 30 October 2014 and the Union President instructed the team to return to London.
26. Subsequently Union Officers have received photographic evidence of the damage done to the coach that shows glass scattered across the central aisle and vomit blocking the toilet bowl and surrounding area.
27. In the quote for repairs provided by the company, £800 of damage is not attributable to the broken glass.
28. George Cross confirmed that club officers had received the Alcohol Code of Conduct for Clubs, Societies and Projects (September 2013 edition) at the start of term.
29. The Governance Committee considered that the inclusion of a bottle of port on the 'kit list' can be viewed as coercion to drink. It also considered the culture of ICSMRFC encouraged excessive consumption of alcohol before and during the coach journey, which created the environment for the damage to the coach to occur.
30. In light of the behavior at Heston, on the coach to Bristol and the breach of the Alcohol Code of Conduct, the Governance Committee is satisfied that the ICSMRFC has brought the Union into disrepute on 22 October 2014 and 29 October 2014.
31. In considering the sanction to place on ICSMRFC the Governance Committee took into account the level of cooperation between the officers of ICSMRFC and the Union in investigating these incidents. It notes the bans on social activity placed across the clubs and the proposed declaration to be signed prior to tours.
32. However, the Governance Committee considered that recurrent breach of the Alcohol Code of Conduct by the same club in the space of a week was a serious departure from the standards that Clubs, Societies and Projects are expected to adhere to. ICSMRFC officers acknowledged that the drinking culture was long-standing in the club, but seemed resigned to it, rather than challenging and addressing it.

33. Accordingly the Governance Committee imposes the following penalties:
- a. ICSMRFC will be suspended for three weeks from the date of this meeting (11 November 2014)
 - b. Suspension of all ICSMRFC social activities until the end of term (up to and including Friday 19 December 2014) (this includes social activities organized under the ICSMRFC name and held both on and off College premises using Union finance processes)
 - c. The members of the third team on the team sheet from the match on 22 October 2014 (listed at Appendix B) will undertake Union service, i.e. work on Union or College campuses of benefit to the College community, to be determined by the Union
34. The costs of repairing the coach will be deducted from the ICSMRFC finances.
35. The Governance Committee will meet in early 2015 to review the effect of these penalties.

VARSIITY MATCH 2015

36. In its deliberations, the Governance Committee considered whether or not to suspend both ICURFC and ICSMRFC from playing in the 2015 Varsity Match.
37. It will liaise with Imperial College, both in the form of the College Tutors, Senior Management Team and Sport Imperial over the next few weeks in order to come to a common opinion as to the status of the 2015 Varsity Match.

OTHER MATTERS

38. The Governance Committee notes that Sport Imperial will inform BUCS and the Rugby Football Union of the outcomes of these and other proceedings.

Dr A J Heeps BSc (Hons) MBBS (Lond) MRCOG
Alumus Trustee
Chair, Governance Committee
11 November 2014