

Council
13 January 2015

GENERAL ELECTION 2015 - PLAN

7 May 2015 will see the most unpredictable General Election in decades.

The combined vote share of Labour & the Conservatives has dropped to record lows, the Liberal Democrats are at their least popular in twenty years, and newer parties such as the Greens and UKIP are making strides on the left and right. In Scotland, polls show the SNP may sweep almost every seat - and could become the United Kingdom's third-biggest Parliamentary party. The rising and falling fortunes of six or more parties, combined with the First Past the Post voting system, means any prediction of the result at this stage is no better than a guess.

This is an opportunity for new and ignored voices to be heard. Politics only works when it involves people - and when people get involved. In the Scottish independence referendum, 68% of Scots aged 16 to 24 voted, compared to 44% across the UK in 2010. The power of youth - and student - votes should not be underestimated. Research by the National Union of Students shows that 200 of the 650 seats in the House of Commons have a margin of victory smaller than their student population.

Democracy is one of Imperial College Union's values. We are proud to be a deeply democratic organisation, with student leaders chosen by election at all levels - club committee members, Academic Representatives, Management Group chairs, Liberation Officers, and the Union President & Deputy Presidents. We are also proud to have the highest election turnout in England & Wales and a huge level of student engagement in our policies, lobbying, activities, campaigns and volunteering. It is not for us to say who you should vote for, or on what issues you should make your democratic choice. But we do think you should speak out, and you deserve to be heard.

We want our value of deep student democracy to guide our work on the General Election as well. The student voice must be amplified and unmistakably heard in the House of Commons, as well as in Beit Quad and College's Faculty Building.

In this strategy, we set our plans for maximising the impact of Imperial College London's students on the 2015 General Election, to the benefit of our members and our community. Through high turnout, through informing students, to 'getting out the vote' on the day, we will ensure our members have the biggest impact possible in the five constituencies with the biggest Imperial populations.

*Tom Wheeler, Pascal Loose, Christopher Kaye, Abi de Bruin and Alex Savell
Imperial College Union's Officer Trustees 2014/15*

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Where we will work:

<p>Five key constituencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Cities of London & Westminster- Kensington- Chelsea & Fulham- Hammersmith- Battersea	<p>Five main parties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Conservative- Green- Labour- Liberal Democrat- Ukip
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Our campaign will have three stages:

<p>VOTER REGISTRATION</p> <p>Giving our students a voice by enabling them to vote</p>	<p>POLITICAL INFORMATION</p> <p>Challenging our candidates and informing our students</p>	<p>GET OUT THE VOTE</p> <p>Amplifying the voice of our students for the biggest political impact</p>
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VOTER REGISTRATION

AIMS

We will make sure our members are able to take part in the 2015 General Election by encouraging and simplifying registration and participation for all members entitled to a vote.

OBJECTIVES

VR1	We will provide clear guidance on how and when to register, including <i>gov.uk/register2ovote</i> , and the change to Individual Voter Registration	January 2015
VR2	We will engage Halls of Residence, College departments, Clubs, Societies & Projects, and campus communities to maximise registration rates and explain the new procedures	March 2015
VR3	We will engage with nationality societies and provide clear guidance on eligibility for non-UK students, explaining how Irish and Commonwealth residents are entitled to vote	March 2015
VR4	We will give students an opportunity to explain why they are registering with an <i>I'm Registering Because...</i> publicity campaign and web content	March 2015

We will know we have succeeded when:

Our online registration information is accessed at least 1000 times	At least 75% of Halls and Nationality Societies agree a promotion plan	Every campus has at least one registration campaign element focused on it
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POLITICAL INFORMATION

AIMS

We will equip our students with information about their local candidates and parties, as well as national party policies relevant to students and young people

We will give Imperial students the chance to influence the political debate where they live and work, by identifying their priority issues and engaging with local prospective parliamentary candidates.

OBJECTIVES

PI1	We will communicate with candidates from at least five parties in each of our five key constituencies	March 2015
PI2	We will identify the issues most important to our membership and challenge local candidates for their views and opinions	March 2015
PI3	We will display candidate and party information online in a clear and navigable fashion, allowing our members to explore which candidates align with their personal beliefs	April 2015
PI4	We will pursue our Higher Education Funding Campaign goals via candidate lobbying and presenting information to our members	April 2015

We will know we have succeeded when:

All 25 candidates from main parties in key constituencies have engaged with ICU	At least 250 students participate in our consultation on key student issues	At least 1000 students use our online candidate information
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GET OUT THE VOTE

AIMS

We will demonstrate that students are equal citizens and residents, with a political voice like any other group

We will maximise the impact of Imperial students by pushing student turnout up as high as possible

OBJECTIVES

GV1	We will promote and explain voting methods, including postal voting, to all members	April 2015
GV2	We will display all polling stations in key constituencies via an online map	May 2015
GV3	We will encourage members to publicly declare they have voted via social media and badges	May 2015

We will know we have succeeded when:

Our online map is used 1000 times in the leadup to Election Day	At least 250 students engage with us on social media about voting
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