

Paper for the Acknowledgement of Imperial Hub's Past Activities and Benefit to Union and Students

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Union Notes

- Imperial Hub is an external organisation that is part of the national charity 'Student Hubs' and works at Imperial College London in the sector of social action volunteering and critical engagement in social and environmental issues. This ranged from highly successful conferences such as the Imperial International Development Conference and the Climate Forum, to bespoke student-led volunteering schemes such as LinkAges and Schools Plus, which for the last few years have enjoyed massive success and acclaim from the student body, the College community and the wider community of Central London.
- Over the course of the year up to August, the Hub and Union Management were in discussions regarding the future of the relationship, following concerns of a new funding model from the central charity, Student Hubs.
- As a result of a meeting with senior College management, the relationship was terminated by the Union Management over the summer, citing a lack of transparency and a breach of trust between the organisations, at a meeting of the Trustee Board (see Appendix One – Trustee Board Report excerpts).
- The Trustee Board admits that the departure of Imperial Hub's programmes, due to the Union's decision, will have a negative impact on the volunteering provision of the union in the short and medium term (see Appendix One – Trustee Board Report excerpts).
- As a result of this, the Union volunteering service was massively expanded and their approach towards volunteering strategy has changed (see Appendix Two – Union release). Although this new approach to volunteering was widely publicised, the only mention to the end of the relationship with Imperial Hub was a Trustee report and a short sentence in the same article. All other surface traces of Imperial Hub have been removed systematically from the Union website.
- In a series of interactions, as recorded by the Felix issues in the first two weeks of term, Imperial Hub's activities in engaging potential members as an external organisation have been significantly undermined by Union staff; this has led to the

demotivation and disenfranchisement of several Hub volunteers at various levels with the organisation.

- It is also noted that in meetings with several members of Hub committees, such as the London Climate Forum, the Union is actively assimilating the current and former projects of Imperial Hub without clear and public recognition of the work that has been undertaken by Hub volunteers to build them up to such a high standard, with simply an effort to rebrand them as Union activities free of Hub involvement.
- No mention of the end of the partnership with the Hub was made in either the first or second Council meeting minutes.
- The petition circulated by Hub volunteers has garnered the support of over 200 members of the College community, including students, staff and alumni of the College. Although inadequate for a special meeting of Council, this is a clear show of the mandate that we have to bring this issue to light and attempt to address it.

Union Believes

- The consultation, or lack thereof, used to justify the termination of the relationship between the Union and the Hub was inadequate.
- The termination of the agreement with Student Hubs was not handled in accordance with the central principles of the Union Plan. The Union's aim to 'increase student volunteering in the outside world' will be compromised by the loss of the programmes offered by the Hub, as recognised by the Trustee Report in Appendix One.
- Imperial Hub was the victim of a Union target to boost the volunteering provision budget; over misplaced fears that money would be diverted from Union volunteer provision, the Union made a knee-jerk decision to significantly expand the fledging volunteer provision at the Union at the expense of the highly effective, student-led programmes provided by Imperial Hub, and in the process significantly compromised its own work in the area of volunteering – Imperial Hub staff were paid by the central charity and had no impact on the Union bottom line; on the other hand, the two new Union staff have a direct impact on the Union bottom line, no matter how much extra money has been brought in.
- The money that has recently been claimed by the Union to expand volunteer provision would have been better invested in Imperial Hub programmes with a proven track record and a clear adherence to the Union's own values of student-centred volunteering in areas of social action. The Union has noted that it will be less able to provide the same services that the Imperial Hub staff, as the latter draws

from years of experience in both professional and student involvement in social action projects.

- The approach to assimilate Imperial Hub projects under the Union portfolio without clear public recognition is unfair and an unjust response to the work that many years of Hub volunteers have undertaken. A land grab following a questionable handling of such a valuable relationship is not the form of behaviour one expects from a charitable organisation, least of all a representative student's union that prides itself on its student-centric approach to its activities.
- The lack of mention of the termination of the relationship in Sabbatical Reports shows clear disregard for the impact that the action has had on the volunteering ecosystem at the Union.

Union Resolves

- The decision to terminate the working relationship with Imperial Hub shall be **reviewed by a working group of the Council.**
- The **efforts and undertakings** of Imperial Hub shall be **publicly recognised by the Union in every project that it attempts to take over from Imperial Hub.**
- There will be a news release that all students can easily read in a format other than a Committee paper from the Union staff relevant to the decision process, **publicly outlining their motivations for the decision.** This will also be **circulated by Sabbatical Newsletters and in Felix to ensure maximum coverage** of the student body.
- The Union will issue an apology to all student volunteers that have been left demotivated and disenfranchised as a result of the decision to remove Imperial Hub from the Union volunteering ecosystem.
- The Union will **review its policy with regards to the handling of similar Memoranda of Understanding with other organisations at present and in the future,** incorporating a **more substantial student consultation process** in which the decision to be made is opened to the scrutiny of all stakeholders.