

Solving Council's Quorum Crisis

Proposed by Owen Heaney (Ordinary Member, FoE)

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The Union notes:

1. That out of five scheduled Council meetings since this year's batch of elections, only two have been quorate.
2. That attendance has been poor even among Ordinary Members- several have automatically lost their positions due to missing several meetings in a row- but that this alone is not responsible for meetings not meeting quorum; many of the ex-officio members have been frequently or entirely absent from meetings this year.
3. That many papers of great interest to the Union's members have fallen by the wayside due to the meetings they were proposed at being inquorate.
4. That the new Student Trustees had to be approved via email vote, with no debate, denying Council the possibility of coming to an informed decision on their ratification.
5. That Ordinary Members who neglect their duty by not attending Council are automatically removed from their position, while ex-officio members cannot be removed easily.

The Union believes:

1. That Council being unable to hold meetings is detrimental to the good running of the Union.
2. That members not turning up (often without apologies) for so many meetings is deeply troubling and shows a disregard for the students by whom they were elected.
3. That having so many inquorate meetings is unfair to those who turn up, only to find that meeting has had to be cancelled.
4. That the Union being almost entirely unable to pass new policy is embarrassing and is detrimental to the Union's reputation.
5. That many members simply have no interest in attending Council and are therefore, by not turning up, impacting upon the overall governance of the Union.
6. That Council cannot properly hold the Officer Trustees to account with such infrequent quorate meetings.

7. That Council risks losing the trust of students, leading to disengagement from Union democracy.
8. That discounting repeat non-attendees from the total used for quorum would allow Council's work to continue being done. Although this may create issues with representation, the Union believes that imperfect representation is better than none at all, and as such measures are justified.

The Union resolves:

1. To amend the Bye-Laws of Imperial College Union as follows:

Below Clause 3 add:

'3.1. Any ex-officio Member of Union Council who does not attend three consecutive meetings of the Council regardless of apologies, or does not attend two consecutive meetings of Council without sending apologies in writing to the Council Chair may, at the discretion of the Council Chair, be discounted from the total number of Members when it is questioned if the meeting is quorate. That is, the total number of Members will be reduced by one for the purposes of determining quorum. For the avoidance of doubt, such a Member retains all their rights as a member of Union Council.

3.2. If an ex-officio Member of Union Council believes that he or she will not be able to regularly attend Meetings of Council, they may apply in writing to Council Chair to be discounted from quorum as if they were subject to clause 3.1. Such applications should only be approved in exceptional circumstances and shall be at the absolute discretion of the Council Chair.

3.3. Should a Council Member who has previously been discounted from quorum subject to clause 3.1 or 3.2 later attend a Meeting of Union Council, such measures shall immediately cease to apply to that Member.

3.4. If a Member who has been reinstated due to clause 3.3 is not present at two consecutive Meetings in the calendar year following their reinstatement, the provisions in clause 3.1 shall automatically apply to them again. However, they shall then be ineligible for reinstatement as under clause 3.3 for the remainder of the academic year in which the Meetings were missed.'

2. To recommend to the Imperial College Union Board of Trustees and Imperial College Council that they adopt these changes to the Bye-Laws.