

Governance Review Update

A note by the President

Earlier this year at the February Council, and a subsequent meeting of the Board of Trustees, it was agreed that a Governance Review¹ should be conducted. This was primarily to allow us to take stock of the current successes and flaws of our current democratic structures and seek improvements before a new Constitution & Bye-Laws is discussed at Council. Unfortunately, progress on the review has been hampered by a number of difficulties including: vacancy of the Chair of Governance sub-committee of Board, lack of staff support resource and the workload of the President. As such, this piece of work has largely been on hold and the guiding committee is yet to meet.

The positive news is that the above issues have now been addressed with Dot Griffiths, a Lay Trustee of the Union, taking on the role of Governance Chair and the President's workload naturally lightening towards the end of the term in Office. This will allow us to get underway in earnest, although the opportunity to run a fully consultative process and develop the new Constitution & Bye-Laws this academic year has clearly passed. As such, we either need to pass a new version at the first Council of the next academic year in order to meet the elapse date of the current ordinances (30th October 2017), or extend the lifetime of the current Constitution to allow a greater period of time for consideration.

I suggest that one Council meeting, with a set of new Councillors, will be insufficient to scrutinise and dissect the ordinances and instead would favour the latter option of extending the lifetime of the current Constitution. A second reason, and one which is of greater importance in my mind, is that this would also allow a full period of student consultation to occur as part of the review in the Autumn term when UG students are on campus - which would not be possible to the same extent if a Constitution had to be brought back to Council mid-October.

My revised proposal is that the steering group meet before the end of the month to set out the various work streams, stakeholder consultations and the delivery mechanisms for the work, in line with their original mandate. Then, before the end of our term of office, we will clearly layout a plan of action which we will carry out until the incoming officers take over. Where possible, work will be completed over the relatively quiet summer, with the majority of the wider consultation taking place in autumn term before the new ordinances are finalised for approval at the start of 2018.

In summary, it is regrettable that more progress has not been made on the governance review, but by extending the current constitution we will ensure that a thorough consultation, and ultimately a better outcome, is achieved.

¹ https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/your-union/how-were-run/committees/16-17/Union_Council/1685

Update to the Governance Review Paper (February 13th 2017)

Proposer: Nas Andriopoulos, President

Seconder: James Cox, Deputy President (Clubs & Societies)

Union Notes that:

1. A Governance Review has been mandated by Board and Council¹.
2. The results of the Governance Review will not be returned this academic year.
3. The current Constitution & Bye-Laws will expire on 30th October 2017.

Union Believes that:

4. It is not desirable, nor good governance, to exist for a period without a valid Constitution & Bye-Laws.
5. It strengthens our democracy to have thorough consultation on matters of this nature with the wider membership, not just Council.
6. Extending the lifetime of the current Constitution would allow time to complete the review and fully discuss its implications in Council before new ordinances are finalised.

Union resolves to:

7. Renew our efforts to carry out the Governance Review.
8. Extend the lifetime of the current Constitution & Bye-Laws until February 28th 2018*.
9. Receive the outcome of the Governance Review before the close of 2017.

*NB: this action requires approval of 2/3rd of quorate Council.