Imperial College Union Governance Committee

AGENDA ITEM NO.	7
TITLE	AE18 review and LE19 update
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	Autumn Elections 2018 were conducted with: • Record turnout among UGs and PGs • Increases in nominees/positions filled • Successful new approaches to the by-election of CSP committees and unelected Reps. Despite the success and the fact that there were no major reputational or procedural incidents, the process uncovered clear areas for improvement, namely the need for resources to tackle the systems which govern the election and to ensure that these are addressed before the next cycle. As preparations begin for LE19, new approaches have been identified around the way positions are communicated and candidates are trained.
PURPOSE	To satisfy this committee's oversight of the conduct of major elections.
DECISION/ACTION REQUIRED	To review the challenges and recommendations, and discuss the proposal with a view to approving for action.

INTRODUCTION

The election of Academic & Wellbeing Reps, Representatives to Council, Constituent Union Committees, CSP Committees and LGBT+ Officer was held in three phases between 29 September and 1 November 2018

- **Autumn Elections (29 Sept – 19 Oct)**
  This involved the election of Academic & Wellbeing Reps, Representatives to Council, Constituent Union Committees, and LGBT+ Officer. It was conducted through the Union's standing Elections Working Group, chaired by the Head of Student Voice & Communications and comprising team members from Education & Welfare, Clubs & Societies, Marketing & Communications, Systems, along with the Union President. The WG worked from a project plan spanning 9 weeks before the close of voting. This election was centralized in terms of communications and was the only one conducted under the AE18 brand. It resulted in **229 positions filled from 263.**

- **CSP By-elections (8-25 Oct)**
  This involved, for the first time, the election of committees for CSPs with over 140 members who had unfilled or vacated positions. It was conducted by the Activities staff team with Systems support and oversight from the Head of Student Voice & Communications. This election was not included under the AE18 brand, communicated only to the relevant clubs using the regular channels used for communicating with CSPs only, and involved no centralized communications from the Union. This was done to prevent message confusion since the dates overlapped with AE18. CSP By-elections resulted in **58 roles filled from 129.**

- **AE18 By-elections (26 Oct -1 Nov)**
  This involved, for the first time, the immediate online election of positions which were unfilled during the main event, were uncontested for various reasons, or which were not included in time for opening of the polls in AE18. This election was conducted by the Education & Welfare staff team and treated in the same manner as the CSP by-election in communications. The aim was to prevent election fatigue and to provide more targeted communications. This process resulted in a further **50 positions being filled from a possible 89.**

RESULTS

The following summarises the conduct and results of these elections:

- More than 80 percent of positions across the representation networks filled
- More candidates vying for open positions this cycle than ever before
- Historic voter turnout and 25 percent increase over last year
- Reversal of the trend of low PG engagement, with historically high participation among PGT and PGR students
- 10 percent growth in Undergraduate participation
- Differentiation of CSP by-elections successfully executed without incident or

message confusion.

- By-elections for unfilled or uncontested positions held immediately online for the first time capturing more representatives into the structured networks at the outset
- Branding for the Elections revamped to align with the other election cycles
- Greater involvement of CUs, PGs and departments in the promotion
- 6 formal complaints and approximately 50 attendees at Candidates' Briefing

NOMINATIONS & VOTING STATISTICS

Nominations
- 4.5% increase in candidates per position / vacancy
- 16% decrease in proportion of positions having no candidates
- 10.6% increase in proportion of positions having 2+ candidates

Voting
Turnout was 33.14% on the back of 6, 570 votes from an electoral pool of 19, 381, as against 26.75 percent last year from 5115 votes.

- UG: 4358 voters of 10180 students - 42.81%
- PGT: 1413 voters of 5147 students - 27.45%
- PGR: 799 voters of 4495 students - 17.78%
- PG all: 2212 voters of 9642 students - 22.94%
- All students: 6570 students of 19822 33.14%

Highlights

- Highest ever UG turnout for Autumn Elections, increase of 10% over last year, first time over 4000 UG voters in Autumn Elections.

- Highest ever PGT turnout for Autumn Elections, increase of 58% over last year, first time over 1000 PGT voters in any AE.

- Highest ever number of PGT voters and second highest turnout for *any* major election, second only to the record-breaking Leadership Elections 2016 (1117 of 3910, 28.57%)
- Highest ever PGR turnout for Autumn Elections, increase of 104% over last year - more than double)

- Almost 1000 more PG voters overall vs last year (2212 – 1229 = 983) Overall turnout increased by 24.8% vs last year

- More voters than in any Leadership Elections prior to 2015 (but not turnout due to smaller electorate in those elections, e.g. Big Elections 2014 was 6537 of 16631, 39.31%)

Clear growth in postgraduates linked to increase in PG roles, more targeted communications during the Welcome period with activities at PGT and PGR Welcome events, as well as inclusion of election information in the Graduate Students' Union video created for GSU and better communication with departments.

Historical performance

UNDERGRADUATES

Year	Voted	Total	Turnout
2013	3555	9075	39.17%
2014	3506	9448	37.11%
2015	3528	9680	36.45%
2016	2569	9843	26.10%
2017	3886	9986	38.91%
2018	4358	10180	42.81%

POSTGRADUATES TAUGHT

Year	Voted	Total	Turnout
2013	682	3624	18.82%
2014	676	3649	18.53%
2015	632	3838	16.47%
2016	414	4369	9.48%
2017	844	4856	17.38%
2018	1413	5147	27.45%

POSTGRADUATES RESEARCH

Year	Voted	Total	Turnout
2013	360	4034	8.92%
2014	418	4046	10.33%
2015	353	3868	9.13%
2016	154	4229	3.64%
2017	385	4432	8.69%
2018	799	4495	17.78%

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- In seeking to increase the number of positions contested through the elections, it was noted that some positions being identified as "unfilled" do not actually have representative cohorts and therefore are not actually positions at all. The process of identifying them against Registry data is labour intensive. There should be a dedicated block of time and resources allocated to properly align course codes against positions in the System in order to get a truer picture of the representation needs of the Union. Relationship needs to be built with College Registry to ensure that we receive timely information on registered students to aligned with our electoral roll.
- More work needs to be done to get all PG positions online and conversations on the back of the success of this election has started to ensure we are further advanced by AE19.
- The information for the Candidate's Pack and which was used in the Candidates' Brief was the same content used historically for Leadership Elections - it's proposed that this be rewritten to capture the difference in campaigning expected. It was felt that candidates', particularly the mostly Year 1s who attended the briefing, would have been intimidated by the examples of campaigning used which were actually not relevant to their success.
- Two mistakes were miscommunicated after the results during the mail merge process – this needs to be automated so there is no potential for this to recur.
- At least two CU positions for inclusion in the election were miscommunicated, leading to an extra position in one case and an unnecessary rep being elected in the other. The Union needs to maintain a record of up to date constitutions for CUs and published deadlines at Union Council for incorporating any changes to these so required positions are clearly established ahead of the cycle.
- The complaints form used historically and for this election contains coding linked to rules which cannot be located. It did not pose a problem since complaints were low, but could potentially be a problem for LE19.
- Approximately 50 students attended the Candidates' briefing, however this was not heavily advertised as it was preferred that students engage with the content online.
- Although increased diversity is a target and it's suspected we made inroads this cycle based on overall trends, we have not yet been able to access data since the Union does not store these. It's proposed that we submit our voter roll to registry in exchange for anonymized data on different diversity fields but that piece of work is yet to be done.

PROPOSALS:

- That resources be identified to:

  o Tackle the body of work required to clean up eActivities before the next AE cycle. This staffing resource could also work on other time intensive elements of Governance including policy updates.
  o To reviewing the results process with a view to making it more automated so there is no room for errors of which there were two such this cycle due to manual errors.

LE19

This committee should have oversight of election planning. With dates approved by this committee and LE19 preparation set to begin in earnest shortly, the committee should note the following intentions of the Working Group:

- Reviewing the job descriptions for each OT with a view to making them more prominent during the nominations campaign so there is more realistic campaigning and candidates with the right motivations are attracted to the roles.
- Re-engaging ICTV to host the debate
- Doing more training for candidates prior to the election itself
- Running a more segmented communications plan
- Liaising with Non-NUS affiliated SUs to identify a Returning Officer for the period.