

## **Constituent Union Support and Development**

**Proposed by:** Andrew Hill - CGCU President

**Seconded by:**

Mike McGill - RCSU President

Dan Faehndrich - ICSMSU President & Student Trustee Elect

Lloyd James - RCSU President (2016-17) & Council Chair Elect

Milia Hasbani - CGCU President (2016-17) & GSU VP (Representation) Elect

Michael Edwards - RCSU President (2017-2018)

### **Union notes:**

1. As stated in the ICU Constitution and Bye Laws, Imperial has Constituent Unions (CUs) as follows:
  - a. City and Guilds College Union (CGCU)
  - b. Royal College of Science Union (RCSU)
  - c. Imperial College School of Medicine Students' Union (ICSMSU)
  - d. Royal College of Mines Union (RSMU)
  - e. Graduates Students Union (GSU)
  - f. Silwood Park Students Union
2. The ICU Constitution states that CUs are "integral parts of the Union" and responsible for:
  - a. Promoting the educational interests and welfare of students during their course of study.
  - b. Providing social, cultural, sporting and recreational activities and forums for discussion and debate, for the personal development of its students.
  - c. Maintaining relationships with the alumni from their respective CU.
3. CUs are lead and operated by student volunteers.
  - a. A volunteer's priority at Imperial is their degree course.
  - b. In order for a volunteer to give their time to the union, they need to be interested, committed, valued, be an engaged stakeholder, and enjoy their time volunteering. If the majority of these are not true, then they are likely to not volunteer.
4. Senior CU volunteers over a number of years have expressed concerns that:
  - a. CUs receive inconsistent training limited to Clubs and Representation officers, and most recently an invitation to the first two days of OT training.
  - b. CUs receive little assistance in their day-to-day operations from ICU staff/OTs.

- c. There are significant communication issues between staff/OTs and the CUs, and CUs are often kept 'out of the loop', and are sometimes not perceived as valuable stakeholders.
- d. CU volunteers are not involved in the strategic leadership and decision-making of the Union, and are not consulted or informed on these decisions.
- e. ICU staff are often unaware of the existence of CUs at Imperial, what their purpose is and how they operate.
- f. The poor state of CU finances are severely affecting the ability of CUs to fulfill their aims.
- g. Awareness among students of Constituent Unions is falling, an effect compounded by the growth of our Faculties. This makes it more difficult to recruit new volunteers.
- h. The workload that some CU volunteers are facing is immense and can have detrimental effects on their mental and physical wellbeing, especially when it affects their coursework and consumes significant proportions of their time.

**Union believes:**

1. CUs must be an integral part of ICU. This means:
  - a. Active involvement in strategic decision making.
  - b. Effective communication and cooperation on the operations and activities of both CUs and Imperial College Union as a whole.
2. Without adequate support, the opportunities CUs provide volunteers has seen volunteer roles become stressful and detrimental to their wellbeing and academic performance, something which is not to be expected of volunteers.
3. If reform does not happen, CUs will continue to lose engagement with members and volunteers, and become ineffective in their aims.

**Union resolves:**

1. Recommend that the Board of Trustees create a CU development strategy in response to the issues that have been raised and with further consultation.
2. Recommended the inclusion of CU development in the next Union Strategy.