**  Imperial College Union Governance Committee**

**18 November 2019**

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| AGENDA ITEM NO. | 9 |
| TITLE | Autumn Elections 2019 Results |
| AUTHOR | Keriann Lee, Head of Student Voice & Communications |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | AE19 was held between 3-25 October with record participation and a number of process improvements. |
| PURPOSE | For the Committee to note the results of the annual Autumn Elections process, review changes and recommendations. |
| DECISION/ACTION REQUIRED | To note results, changes and recommendations and agree proposal to remove seconders through Union Council. |
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**INTRODUCTION**

The election of Academic & Wellbeing Reps, Council Representatives, Constituent Union Committees, CSP Committees and Liberation Officers was held in two phases between 03 October and 13 November 2019.

* **Autumn Elections (3 Oct – 25 Oct)** This was conducted through the Union’s standing Elections Working Group, chaired by the Head of Student Voice & Communications and comprising team members from Systems, Representation, Activities, Marketing & Communications. The WG worked from a project plan spanning 8 weeks before the close of voting.
* **AE18 By-elections** **(26 Oct – 13 Nov)** This involved, for the second year, 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 Representation staff team and localized in terms communications. The aim was to prevent election fatigue and to provide more targeted communications. Overall, 360 positions were elected.

**RESULTS**

The following summarises the conduct and results of these elections:

* The highest voter turnout for any Autumn Election at Imperial with the voter turnout exceeding 34% (34.31%).
* The first time the number of voters in Autumn Elections has exceeded 7,000 (last year was first time over 6K)
* Highest ever Undergraduate turnout for Autumn Elections - increase of 5% over last year and only the second year over 4, 000.
* Highest ever number of Postgraduate voters – 2, 334 voters, a consolidation of last year’s major gains.

**Voting**

Turnout was 34.31% on the back of 7, 126 voters against 33.14 % in 2018 from 6, 570 voters; and 26.75 percent in 2017 from 5115 voters.

* UG: 4792 voters of 10602 students – 45.20%
* PGT: 1442 voters of 5434 students - 26.54%
* PGR: 892 voters of 4737 students - 18.83%
* PG all: 2334 voters of 10171 students - 22.95%
* All students: 7126 voters of 20, 773 students 34.31%

**Historical performance**

**UNDERGRADUATES**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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% |
| 2019 | 4792 | 10602 | 45.20% |

**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% |
| 2019 | 1442 | 5434 | 26.54% |

**POSTGRADUATES RESEARCH**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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% |
| 2019 | 892 | 4737 | 18.83% |

**Faculty turnout:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Faculty Name | Voters | Electorate | Turnout |
| Faculty of Medicine | 1296 | 4551 | 28.5% |
| Imperial College | 464 | 2366 | 19.6% |
| Faculty of Engineering | 3488 | 8728 | 40.0% |
| Faculty of Natural Sciences | 1878 | 5126 | 36.6% |

**Departments:**

Six departments exceeded 40% turnout, the highest being Earth Science and Engineering with 45.11% turnout, narrowly beating Bioengineering (45.01%)

**Position turnouts:**

Ignoring the club with two members who both turned out for a 100% turnout, the highest turnout was for the 'Electrical & Electronic Engineering: MSc Control Systems' PG Academic Rep position, with an 88.89% turnout (24 voters out of 27), and there were five other rep positions with turnouts above 80%, with another eight in the 70% - 80% bracket ...

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**Turnouts for L&C Officers:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Liberation & Community: Disabilities Officer | 4251 | /20773 | - 20.46% |
| Liberation & Community: Gender Equality Officer | 3980 | /20773 | -19.16% |
| Liberation & Community: International Officer | 3933/ | 20773 | - 18.93% |

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International Officer had almost 30 candidates and went to over 20 rounds in the STV voting system.

**Turnouts for Council Reps:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Council Representative (PG Engineering) | 539 | /3701 | * 14.56% |
| Council Representative (PG Medicine) | 197 | /2179 | * 9.04% |
| Council Representative (PG Non Faculty) | 323 | /2333 | * 13.84% |
| Council Representative (PG Science) | 292 | /1958 | * 14.91% |
| Council Representative (UG Engineering) | 1142 | /5027 | * 22.72% |
| Council Representative (UG Medicine) | 478 | /2372 | * 20.15% |
| Council Representative (UG Science) | 778 | /3170 | * 24.54% |

**PROCESS CHANGES:**

The Elections Working Group continues to make process improvements to make the annual elections more efficient and to improve outcomes.

The following changes marked this cycle:

* The opening date for nominations was moved a week later than usual to allow more time for new students to understand the elections and the purpose of representation. 70% of UG Year 1 students participated in this election.
* All training was conducted online for the first time as the Union moves towards digital transformation and the flexibility it affords.
* A training video was made.
* Rules were simplified and the Candidates’ Pack revised to make it more user friendly.
* Non-student facing managers were tapped as Deputy Returning Officers for first year to reduce tension between the people required to enforce difficult rules and those required to onboard the new Reps. The Head of Student Experience and Head of Finance performed this role with success. This freed the Rep and Activities manager to get on with other projects during the elections.
* A Microsoft Teams integrated app was used by the DROs to manage complaints as the automation process which started last year continues to improve. There were four complaints, so the approach will have to await the larger Leadership Elections to be sufficiently tested.
* There was greater focus on more evenly promoting the elections across all campuses and the emphasis on the nominations period and getting students to understand the roles helped.
* No OTs or other students were allowed to participate in the election process as this was felt to reduce perceptions of conflicts of interest.

**CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

* 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 and would require dedicated resources to properly align course codes against positions in the System in order to get a truer picture of the representation needs of the Union. However, it was decided during Leadership Team’s 19-20 Planning Process process that this should not be a priority. The new electoral system to be developed within the next year should address this.
* Failing to refresh the electoral roll often enough during the nominations period caused a handful of candidates to be disenfranchised and they had to be manually added. More dates will be added for future cycles.
* There were small glitches with the e-voting system causing a handful of problems with positions and a communications error where the same email was refreshed and sent four times to all students. This was corrected and an apology issued.
* There were more reports of students not finding the Manifesto pages user-friendly – this will be addressed for LE19 with clearer communication.

**PROPOSALS:**

* + That the need for seconders be removed from the elections nominations process as it is considered a relic of the paper era. Should the Committee agree, this change would need to be approved by Council.