



**Imperial College Students' Union
Board of Trustees / 09 December 2020**

Minutes (18 November 2020 Board of Trustees)

1. Introduction & Attendance

Jill Finney (JF) (Chair)	Phil Power (PP)
Stephen Richardson (SR)	Graham Parker (GP)
Kate Owen (KO)	Dorothy Griffiths (DG)
Abhijay Sood (AS)	Shervin Sabeghi (SS)
Sam Lee (LS)	Alex Auyang (AA)
Ross Unwin (RU)	Lloyd James (LJ)
Chris Carter (CC)	Kelvin Zhang (KZ)
Milia Hasbani (MH)	

In attendance

Tom Flynn (Managing Director) (TF)
Tom Newman (Head of Membership Services) (TN)
Jayne Hufford (Interim Finance Director) (JH)
Ashley Cory (Systems Manager) (AC)
Victoria Agbontaen (Governance Officer) (VA)
Alastair Lyon (External Auditors – Crowe LLP) (AL)

2. Apologies

Michaela Flegrova (MF)

3. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

4. Matters arising/Forward Agenda

TF confirmed that he recently met with College's VAT team and an update will be provided during AOB.

5. Conflict of interest declarations

None

6. Consideration of confidential business

TF stated AOB will include confidential business.

7. Managing Directors' Report

TF gave an overview of the paper, highlighting the Union response to the new government guidelines by moving staff to work remotely which is likely to be in place until the start of term two. TF added there are currently ongoing discussions about the Union's plans for the Christmas break and what the Union will be offering students during this period. TF updated Trustees on the sector, highlighting the challenges many universities are facing around reduced Block grant funding due to the pandemic.

Paper was taken as read and no further questions were asked.

Board noted the verbal update.

8. Officer Trustee Team Update

AS gave a verbal update advising Board that it was important to highlight the work the OT's are doing on advising students with the new change in government guidelines, particularly CSPs. AS added that in the absence of campus activity due to the building closures, there has been more of focus on project work for the OT's.

Board noted the verbal update.

9. 2019/20 Annual Accounts & Trustees' Report

AL gave a brief overview of the accounts, commending Trustees and stated that the text in the Trustees report on how the Union has been impacted by the pandemic was the best he had reviewed as it includes information about how the Union has adapted by bringing things online, how operational issues have been addressed as well as outlining the financial consequences.

AL added that there had been some discussion on adding in the VAT position to the report as HRMC are seeking to recover VAT from all Unions.

Board approved the annual audited accounts and letter of representation pending the amendment of the date on the letter.

10. Audit Findings Report

AL briefed the Trustees with an overview of the audit, noting that specific findings in the report showed that there has been improvement from previous years but there is a need for the finance team to consistently review negative entries and post missing invoices.

Trustees were informed that issues had been identified, as per the report but significant adjustments are being made to improve on this.

- i. GP stated that the annual report was an interesting read, and he is happy that the report reads in a forward facing manner, looking on how finance systems can be improved.

Board considered the annual Audit Findings Report, noting the actions required and progress made against previous years.

11. Trustee Recruitment Pack

TF advised that the Trustee recruitment pack would go live this week and highlighted that the pack sets out the main skills that the Union is looking for within its lay Trustees including sector knowledge, governance, charity law and HR.

- i. A question was asked by SP whether it had been considered for potential candidates to have informal chats with current lay Trustees as well as the MD. Trustees were informed that it is welcomed for them to speak with interested candidates if they are happy to do so.
- ii. A question was asked by MH why the timetable of recruitment is happening earlier on in the year than expected. Trustees were informed that the Union would like to recruit and appoint the Board Chair early in order for there to be adequate time for

a sufficient handover with the current Chair to avoid a loss of institutional knowledge. Trustees were informed that if only a low number of candidates apply, this early recruitment phase allows for an extension of the deadline and time to possibly re-recruit if necessary.

- iii. A question was asked by KO on whether the amount of time commitment specified for the role was insufficient as Trustees usually do attend more than one meeting per month. KO asked whether time spent outside meetings, as well as in meetings should also be considered and specified in the pack. Trustees were informed that the recruitment pack would be amended to clarify that point.

Board considered the information pack for the recruitment of two lay trustees, and a new Chair of the Board.

12. Staffing & Furlough Update

TF gave a brief overview of the paper, updating Trustees that the Union has been able to access the job retention scheme for casual staff through the College. TF added that significant use of the scheme (including the use of part time furlough) for both permanent and casual roles has helped mitigate some of the financial impact of the pandemic

TF highlighted that the furlough plan for staff will be reviewed at the end of November but that ICU will continue to make use of the scheme for the foreseeable future – using both full time and part-time furlough where required until the 31st of March when the government has advised that the scheme will end.

Board noted the ICU'S use of the coronavirus job retention scheme on both a full and part time basis for both permanent and casual staff.

Any Other Business*

TF provided trustees with a presentation on VAT and the Union/College position on this. TF stated that HMRC are currently reviewing the VAT of all bars Student Unions' in the country. TF informed trustees that the University has been approached on the matter and are happy with the response ICU have provided.