

Deputy President (Clubs & Societies) Report to Union Council – February 2021

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Time for another council report, and I thought I'd make this one a bit different from my reports so far. It's much more of a narrative and will hopefully give you more than a glimpse into the projects I'm working on across the Union and an idea of how students can get more involved. But to start with, an update on how I'm progressing with my objectives:

1. Overhaul training for CSP, MG & CU volunteers

As outlined in my first report back in October, my ambition is to introduce new training and content for these groups of volunteers for those taking office in the 2021/22 Academic Year. We're on track!

A full internal learning needs analysis of all committee roles has been conducted by the Student Opportunities & Development team, this has also highlighted all Union policies and processes that different roles require a thorough understanding of. This comprehensive document forms the base platform for all volunteer training. We are currently improving all volunteer welcome booklets that provide an overview of this information. These will be sent to successfully elected candidates shortly after the elections. We're also going to implement some changes to assist handovers more efficiently.

Building on the development research that my predecessor did, I've had 1:1 meetings with senior volunteers within CSPB, alongside Tom Newman, and will continue to hold these meetings with them. They provide an invaluable insight and I really enjoy meeting with them all. Thanks for all of your inputs so far, and let's make more improvements.

2. Increase accessibility and inclusivity of our CSPs

This project has kicked off. More exciting updates to come in future reports, but I'm building a project plan that won't be ready before I have to submit this report. The student opportunities and development team are completing a piece of work to understand our membership and collate this data.

Imperial Athletes creates a perfect platform to launch social & recreational sports programmes again when we return from this COVID-19 induced pause. Imperial leagues will complement our BUCS and LUSL fixtures. We are also reviewing

3. Setting a long-term trajectory for CSP space and storage

While thousands of students are learning entirely remotely, and office working is not essential, it has been very difficult to spend time on campus and audit our current storage and activity spaces. Sam and I are pushing for the UCH redevelopment to happen this year. This is a beast of a project, and has a budget of over £400,000 from the Harlington Grant for a significant redevelopment. Sam and I continue to work with various Union, College and external staff on this project as well as key stakeholders from the Concert Hall User Group. It's an incredibly exciting project, but will continue to take up a large amount of Sam's, and my, time.

The next part of our CSP Space Project is underway and a space survey will be circulated to all student groups. This will be the first holistic review of all our of spaces in over 10 years and will ensure a long term plan for the improvement and maintenance of student spaces.

A quick update on the West Basement and UDH Storage areas. The West Basement has had a deep clean and exterminators have had a month to ensure the space is pest proof (at quite a significant cost). The Storage room behind the UDH has also been deep cleaned, and all labelled equipment has been returned. All unlabelled equipment is being processed under the equipment policy. Any students concerned about this should get in touch.

4. Support our CSPs by reviewing the most broken processes

Starting new clubs and societies is surprisingly difficult at Imperial, and the process has been broken for as long as any staff can remember. A decision was taken at the start of term one to suspend the creation of new clubs during the pandemic to enable us to focus support on our existing 380 clubs. The New Activities Committee (NAC) met on Jan 28th and we have since reopened applications to create new CSPs. The committee are contributing to the restructure of the New Activities Incubator and how the new club creation process works. This will be ready for the creation of any new clubs in the next cycle.

We are also continuing with the ICU CSP Development Plan. I've inserted an extract for reference here:

“The lack of support combined with antiquated systems and processes has led to CSPs developing workarounds and generally acting in an autonomous manner. Union and College reviews and audits have highlighted safety concerns over CSP storage, the use of spaces across sites and concerns over health and safety practices of CSP activity. Whilst self-determination and entrepreneurial spirit of students should be propagated, it must be done in a clear framework of centralised support from the Union that enhances student led activity whilst ensuring it is safe and sustainable.

An outline plan for the next 3 years has been developed to define the roadmap to transform the Union’s support offer for student groups. The goal is to offer a clearly articulated, high quality support service for student led activity that enables CSPs to achieve their objectives, improving measurably the experience and satisfaction of members and volunteers.

Through consultation by the DPCS and Head of Membership services in 2019-20, research gathered by the Student Opportunities and Development Manager in developing the Volunteer Development Plan, and analysis of the Student Experience Survey and NSS, a number of work areas have been identified as focus areas for improvement over the next three years.

Work Area	Description
Space/Facilities	Understanding space requirements of all CSPs, developing and delivering a space strategy that meets need. This includes the room booking processes, and management of equipment and waste.
Financial processes	Improving financial processes, systems and controls for CSPs to ensure efficiency, fair allocation of grant, and adequate support for CSPs to be financially sustainable. This includes administration of contracts, sponsorships, refunds, funding pots, annual budgeting, financial approvals, finance operations, membership sales
Service Standards & Working practices	Improving the operating processes and knowledge base of the staff team that supports CSPs, to ensure there is well documented systems and processes, and to enable a culture of excellent customer service delivered by supported and engaged staff. This includes document storage, helpdesk service manual, tankard administration, CRM system.

BAU	Document and deliver the business as usual activity that supports CSP activity whilst ensuring it is delivered in a coherent, efficient and sustainable way. This includes halls fund support, disciplinary and complaints, admin support.
Events Development	& Ensuring there is sufficient developmental support available to CSPs to enhance their activity and support leaders to have an excellent experience. This includes training, communications, priority Union events (welcome week, welcome back week, Varsity), awards and recognition, campaigns, incubator support (NAC), CSP calendar, CSP event management, trips and tours, RAG/charity,
Health Safety	and To ensure that all activity undertaken by CSPs is safe, that activity is adequately overseen by the Union and compliant with relevant legislation. This includes transport, storage, insurance, activities and risk assessments.
Data & Insights	To improve the Union's use of data and insight in order to inform meaningful improvements to service delivery to enhance the experience of members and volunteers.
Governance	To ensure that CSPs are supported to operate efficiently within the governance structures of the Union. This includes elections, committee support, CU and MG support, constitutions.

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The following is an extract and explanation of some activities that are being undertaken this year:

- Documenting business as usual – a central wiki has been set up that will hold operational information for CSP support to be accessible for staff, OTs and student volunteers & the entirety of eActivities is being mapped
- Transport provision project – We are currently surveying all student groups here: <https://imperialcollegeunion.us13.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ef9883df96a0cbad259c02f63&id=fb768866e4&e=ba025a231e> and conducting focus groups and individuals. We will create a sustainable longer-term plan for the Union's transport provision including minibuses
- A CSP Comms calendar has been created to ensure that CSPs are told about the right things at the right time of year. I have also made ACOs as open and honest as possible to ensure students are kept up to date with anything affecting them. This has been well received by lots of volunteers and officers I have spoken to.
- CSP Profiling Project – Work has started on helping all staff at the Union to deepen our understanding of the requirements of Management Groups, CUs, CSPs, what their objectives are and how we can enhance our support.
- Sponsorship contracts – all credit to Sam (DPFS), the Finance & Risk committee have given authority to delegate sponsorship contract signing to more people than just the DPFS, this is the start of improving this process. SSB and CSPB have been involved in this.
- CSP Elections – all CSP elections have been moved online to the eVoting platform for a number of reasons. The timeframe will be identical to that of leadership elections and we are strongly encouraging all CSPs to still host a hustings and/or a General Meeting. The perfect timeline for this exists between candidates being announced and voting opening (10th March – 15th March).

- NAC & Incubator clubs – as stated above we are reviewing support for new activities and incubator clubs. Important to note that no new clubs that have been adversely affected by COVID will suffer as a result.
- CSP Storage – as stated above, work is ongoing to understand & document what spaces are currently used for storage by CSPs, and to make all existing storage safe and useable. In line with this, some old, unused, broken, and unlabelled items may be disposed of in accordance to the equipment policy.
- A CRM tool is being researched that may help the union respond to queries faster.
- Club culture project – ongoing to help our CSPs be more inclusive.

On top of all of this it's budgeting season for CSPs. This takes up a lot of time. I have been meeting with clubs that require greater assistance, and have a considerable number of meetings with Move Imperial as we try to budget for Imperial Athletes.

A summary of my time split. It's still a rough estimate:

Prep time and meetings with:			Operational work (day-to-day)	Project work (major goals)	Misc
College	Move Imperial	Students & the Union			
9%	21%	42% (inc. Budgeting)	10%	10%	8%

Upcoming activities:

- Budgeting
- Budgeting
- More budgeting
- Kit Tender with Move Imperial
- Work on all projects as listed above