

**Imperial College Union  
Board of Trustees / 8 December 2021**

**Officer Trustee Update**

**President / Dr Lloyd T James**

Objective: Reviewing our offer to Postgraduates

Update: [In Progress] Following the completion of the PG Engagement Survey and focus groups, the GSU Review working group determined that more research was required before forming a set of recommendations, so the conclusion of this review was pushed back to January. I have interviewed a number of former engaged GSU volunteers to build an evidence base for this decision-making. I have also coordinated the efforts of the Representation Team in gathering other data on PG engagement from eActivities, Student Experience Survey, eVoting etc. The deadline for compiling all written/data evidence was Nov 26th. We will be meeting again on Dec 3rd to hammer out some basic recommendations, which will then be refined and compiled into a report over the period before Christmas. This will then be presented to Council and Board for approval in January.

Objective: Reviewing our democratic structures

Update: [In Progress] A project plan has been developed for delivering this objective. I invited interested members of Council to put themselves forward for a Working Group to progress this, however I had no volunteers. I am bringing this request back to the subsequent Council meeting, and stressing that if we have no working group the project will not be able to proceed.

Objective: Understanding community development

Update: [In Progress] Some early consideration around this going into the development of the revised Student Experience Survey questions. This will then be progressed further through Term 2.

Objective: Supporting Constituent Unions

Update: [In Progress] Continued to have semi-regular catch ups with CU Presidents, and provided ICU representation at CU events. Discussion at GIB suggested a need for Leadership and Management training for Constituent Union Presidents which I have actioned.

Objective: Developing a coherent lobbying agenda for Campus Services and Estates

Update: [In Progress] Continuing to engage regularly with senior stakeholders in Estates, including Neil Alford (Associate Provost - Academic Planning), who was invited to attend a recent Council meeting, and through attendance at College Council's Property Committee. Initiated project to map out key decision-makers and decision-making committees around estates decisions in the College. Fed back on plans for significant increase in student space on the North side of the White City campus.

**Deputy President (Education) / Daniel Lo**

Objective: Work closely with faculty and departmental academic reps (dept reps) to ensure departments are actively addressing the issues/ feedback raised in the NSS response

Update: Since the last board update, I have submitted the ICU National Student's Survey (NSS) response to the Provost Board, where I received positive comments from them. The College is going to set up an NSS task and finish (T&F) group to monitor the implementation of our response. This is likely to be conducted in term 2. In addition, I encouraged dept reps to present their departmental NSS recommendations to their Head of Department and Director of Undergraduate/Postgraduate Studies. I have met with most dept reps to ensure they are comfortable chairing their first student-staff committees (SSCs). In term 2, I will actively follow up on the implementation in the T&F group and create an action tracker to evaluate how departments respond to the recommendations presented in the first SSCs.

Objective: Providing support on development training for reps and foster the sharing of good practice across different departments

Update: Besides the rep training for UG academic and wellbeing faculty reps and dept reps in September, the representation team and I organised and delivered 3 sessions of in-person training for UG year reps and 3 sessions of online PG rep training in mid-November. In addition, PG academic and welfare officers (AWOs, equivalent to faculty reps) and Horizon reps were trained in late November. There were over 400 reps received training from the ICU, and I will continue providing support for them and ensure they can deliver their roles successfully.

I think cross departmental interaction is key, and I have managed to provide opportunities for reps to interact. For example, I added group exercise and team games in the rep training sessions. The DPW and I also organised rep socials for reps to meet and interact with each other informally. In a more formal interaction, academic reps are invited to Academic Rep Forums (ARF) and Education & Representation Board (ERB) to discuss about academic policies and sharing good practice.

Objective: Work closely with PG AWOs to ensure the departments are actively addressing the recommendations raised in the PRES response (New objective)

Update: This objective was not included in the September Board meeting, as I was deciding to combine the NSS and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) response objectives together. Alongside with the PG engagement review carried out by other OTs and the representation team, it is important to engage with PG AWOs and PG reps in the same way with UG reps, despite being less familiar with issues affecting PG Taught and PG Research students. The Union President has first-hand experience of being a PGR student, I believe his input to collaborate with the production of the ICU PRES response is beneficial to the delivery of the objective. Before drafting the response in term 2, I have been involved in the PRES task and finish group, and PGR quality committee to provide initial data analysis and recommendations in October and November. After the PG AWOs have settled down in their roles, I will interact with them more often in ARF and ERB, as well as scheduling 1:1 catch-up with them.

Given that the rep structure in the PG area is different, there are fewer reps and some of them were elected internally. This makes me harder to ensure all reps were invited to our training if departments do not notify the ICU with the names of the reps. In addition, PG research experience varies a lot and depends on their supervisor. Hence, the learning experience of students can be very different within the same department. This makes representation harder for PGR students despite our greatest effort to do so. The PRES survey is an important indicator of PGR students' research experience, a wide consultation with PGR dept reps and the AWOs is important to back-up our proposed recommendation and ensure they are represented by the ICU.

Objective: Review the Mums and Dads scheme to investigate what the right cause of action is

Update: ICU has run a 'mums and dads' (M&D) buddy scheme over a number of years. The scheme aims to support community cohesion and transition for first-year students ('children') into life at Imperial, by pairing them with current students on their course ('parents'). 'Parents' can provide academic, social and signpost to pastoral support, as well as creating families with additional 'children' so that first years can benefit from peer support.

Currently, this scheme is run both centrally by ICU, as well as by department societies. This year, owing to staffing changes within the ICU and a later timeline of activity, department societies ran the schemes independently. I have an interest in reviewing how the scheme supports student mental health, continuation at the College, and academic attainment. The review will last for the entire year and new changes will be implemented by my successor in the next academic year. Because the review is not time sensitive, there is a long timeline to allow some flexibility. Student consultation will be conducted in term 2, surveys for M&D participants (both parents and children) will be included in the student experience survey (SES). I will also lead the Christmas buddy scheme this year and part of the evaluation will contribute to the M&D review to evaluate matchmaking process, student engagement and more.

Objective: Enhance the Imperial experience for international students to ensure there is parity with home students (New objective)

Update: This is also a new objective set by me after the board meeting. As an international student and a non-native English speaker, I know first-hand the challenges that my community faces, both in terms of their academic experience and also their ability to access College services effectively. I am working to develop a project plan to understand and lobby for improvements for this cohort in term 2. This may include:

- Work with departments and the Union Advice Centre to understand issues which particularly impact international students (e.g. plagiarism).
- Work with the Careers Service to introduce a Careers fair featuring employers which sponsor international graduate visas.
- Work with International Student Support team and the Student Hub to ensure that support services are accessible and well signposted to international students.

**Deputy President (Welfare) / Nathalie Podder**

Objective: Post-Pandemic Reintegration of the Imperial Community

Update: [In progress] A conversation was held with Lloyd in October about our plan for this joint objective. It was decided that Lloyd would take over the research side of this objective, which I will then use to inform my implementation of projects to address current cultural and wellbeing issues faced by students after the pandemic. Some initial work was already implemented at the start of the year with the Stay Safe 2021 Campaign. This involved providing welfare support to students during night events in Beit Quad with the help of the Christian Union and implementing Active Bystander Training of casual and full-time bar staff as well as the Ask for Angela scheme. Later in the term, I had a conversation with the head of mental health services about what main issues students are currently facing and she highlighted two main issues: lack of access to specialised services and inconsistent, often poor pastoral care from supervisors to postgraduate research students. I plan to draft a project plan that will be delivered jointly between the Union and College's Mental Health Services in the upcoming year which will involve facilitating conversations between postgraduate students and supervisors on how they can improve their working relationship.

### Objective: CSP Culture Review

Update: [Not Yet Started] I plan to begin work on drafting the questions and framework for consultation around culture in CSPs together with India and the Policy Research Officer in the upcoming term. At present, those resources are being prioritised in finalising the sexual misconduct survey report, which will help inform our approach to the disciplinary work that we will partake in within the College. I also plan to form a working group made up of students who attended the Town Hall on spiking, as well as participants in active campaigns like ICUsToo and Girl Up.

### Objective: Improving Safeguarding and Disciplinary Procedures

Update: [In Progress] I drafted and presented a paper to Union Council on the Union's Response to College's Student Disciplinary Procedures, which passed with an overwhelming majority of 37 yes's and 1 abstain. I then presented this paper to the Student Experience Committee and some preliminary members of the College's working group to review its disciplinary procedures; in both places, it was received positively by College staff, with a willingness to look forward to collaboration with the Union to work on jointly identified issues around student discipline. The membership of the working group will be approved by Senate in December, and the group will start to meet in the next term. Additionally, Sam and I led a joint campaign to improve the safety in venues around spiking, called "Nights Out Should be Safe for Everyone!" We implemented drink lids and test strips, wrote guidance for staff on how to respond to suspected cases of spiking, hired dedicated first aid and booked out quiet spaces during large night events, and made physical posters as well as posts on social media to advertise these changes. I then chaired a Town Hall to address the students who had ongoing concerns and worries about spiking and made a dedicated action list for measures that still needed to be straightened out in their implementation. The next steps for this campaign will include working with the ICSMSU president to communicate with neighbouring venues on their safety initiatives, and to take part in a security review which will be led by senior management.

### Objective: Welfare Representation Network Review

Update: [In Progress] At least once a week, I have met with department reps to have a chat about their experiences within their roles. I have made some notes on what they feel can be done to improve their ability to represent more effectively, and what the Union could do to better support them. Some of these preliminary suggestions include better signposting resources and more training on how to support lower-level reps.

### Objective: Developing the Union's EDI Strategy

Update: [In Progress] A task and finish group was formed to take the lead on the development of the Union's EDI strategy and EDI action plan. An initial meeting was held to discuss key concepts and questions around EDI in the Union; points from the meeting were then used to draft and send out an invitation to tender to a number of EDI consultancy firms. Three firms responded with a tender, and two of these were shortlisted for an interview. The interview panel was a subgroup of members of the task and finish group, and their decision was to select Koreo as the EDI consultant that the Union will be working with. In terms 2 and 3, they will jointly be delivering a project plan and timeline, a research project on existing EDI trends within the Union, a framework for consultation and implementation, a written EDI strategy, and a written EDI action plan for the Union. The EDI strategy and action plan will encompass the entire organisation and will serve to complement as well as enable the Back to Basics strategy.

## **Deputy President (Clubs and Societies) / India Marsden**

### Objective: Training for CSP Committees

Update: [Not yet started] This update will mostly be implemented in the latter half of this year. Connor, Sam and I have worked to ensure that there will be staff focus on this area in the future through the revised structure of the team. Although not directly related to the original content of this objective, I have worked with Nathalie to roll out Consent Training to our CSP Committees over the past few weeks. We will look to use what we have learnt from this ad hoc training to inform the regular training that will be given to new committees at the end of this academic year.

### Objective: CSP systems and Processes

Update: [In Progress] This objective has been a big part of my project work. We have done a significant amount of work to iron out the processes associated with the subcommittees of the Clubs, Societies and Projects Board, which are Tours, New Activities Committee and Activities Development Fund. This was done with consultation with the team that manages the groups and involved us carefully reviewing the policy involved to figure out related issues. We have also commenced a review of what system we use for budgeting, as there have been many issues in the past.

### Objective: Imperial Athletes

Update: [In Progress] After some significant discussion with Move, we were able to run Student townhalls on Imperial Athletes, focusing on the Membership model, the funding model, the budgeting process, the community it creates and the processes surrounding it. A lot of interesting comments and suggestions were made, and we are now working on compiling these into an action plan for the changes we wish to make to IA. One decision that has already been made is that the budgeting process for sport will be realigned with the process for other societies, to ensure better accountability and visibility of the sport spending to the other groups.

### Objective: Communication (Response times)

Update: [In Progress] I think most CSPs would agree that response times in general have improved. The drop-in sessions (online and in person) run by the activities team have been a great success in helping to resolve student problems quickly, while also helping keep their inbox under control! Work had to be paused on the implementation of a CRM system, as there are many other things to be worked on more urgently. With the inbox more controlled, this system is more of a nice to have, rather than a priority. We intend to pick this up again in Spring term.

### Objective: Student Representation around Spaces

Update: [Still to begin] As the representation systems around this topic are not completely broken, it has not been at the top of the priority list. We intend to pick this up late in Spring term with the intention of electing the representatives for the following academic year.

## **Deputy President (Finance & Services) / Sam Lee**

### Objective: Union Sustainability

Update: [In progress] I have planned a timeline for student and staff engagement in supporting the development of the Union's Ethics Policy and the Union's Sustainability Strategy. The Union's Ethics Policy is a controversial topic and this is why I am going to be running focus groups and workshops with students to ensure we develop this policy inline with all views. This is likely to have a large impact on the operations of multiple teams within the Union, and a potential financial impact on our CSPs. Our sustainability strategy will be developed to inform our best practice going forwards, and we will be making reference to (and improving upon) the College's Sustainability Strategy for our own operational and strategic developments.

#### Objective: Developing a coherent lobbying agenda for Campus Services & Estates

Update: [In progress] I have had multiple engagements and discussions with Campus Services about how we can increase student voice and representation in key areas of Campus Services that have not had this integration in the past. We are currently planning on co-creating a Catering Committee within the department that will have students at the heart, looking to increase the range and diversity of the catering provision on campus. We are also working together to unify the approach to allergen and dietary requirements, making it more visible and easier to understand across all outlets (including externally run outlets) that puts the burden on the outlets to ensure they are making the information accessible rather than putting the onus on the student or staff member to have to ask for more details.

#### Objective: CSP Systems and Processes

Update: [In progress] have initiated a review into our Annual Budgeting procedure for CSP grant allocation. The timeline for the budgeting process has been consulted on with Finance, Audit & Risk and we have delayed the timeline a little to we are making the timeline fit student requirements and exam seasons. I am also currently in the middle of reviewing the software that is used for annual budgeting, as it is a very complex software that was custom built which has some challenges and is partially broken. We will be engaging students on how best to move forwards with this process to ensure the system we are using is accessible to all, and functions how we need it to.

#### Objective: Commercial Review

Update: [Ongoing] We are currently in the middle of an EPOS review (our Point-of-Sale hardware & software) as we have been in need of a new system for a long time. The current system is not setup correctly and is incredibly complex and difficult to use which has sometimes limited the functionality of the venues and retail. I have also been working with Nathalie on our work to ensure our venues are safe for our students (which although we were doing anyway) has been accelerated due to the spiking issues that have been nationally raised. Nathalie has worked incredibly hard and I am in no doubt that we are providing a safe space for students when they are coming out to drink and eat in our venues.

#### Objective: Services & Sustainability Board

Update: [Upcoming] I have started researching a suite of policies and papers for this subcommittee of Union Council to have ownership over. I have also planned a first meeting for the Union's Events Committee which will oversee the creative direction of the Union's Summer Ball which I have worked with the Director of Finance & Resources on drafting a budget for.