

**TRUSTEE BOARD****COVER SHEET**

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Union President Discussion Items</b>
<b>Agenda item:</b>	Item 10
<b>Action requested:</b>	Commercially Sensitive – Not for wider circulation
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stance on Higher Education legislative change</li><li>• Alumni &amp; Life Membership</li><li>• External Revenue Ideas</li></ul>
<b>Summary of recommendations:</b>	-

## Imperial College Union President's Report

### 1. Higher Education Policy

#### a. Summary

I have invested significant amount of time in dealing with the legislative changes that are occurring in the Higher Education sector at present. This includes taking steps to engage in the passage of the Higher Education and Research Bill (HERB) through the House of Lords, working with College in their written Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission and the move to update the Union's Policy on Higher Education Policy. In order to best meet the needs of our members in the future, Imperial College Union needs to build the capacity and tradition of representing our members' views externally to government. *Our Strategy 2017-20* outlines how we should encourage our members to be active responsible citizens and I believe this requires us to play a leading role in the national debate on education.

#### b. College and co-authoring the TEF Submission

Last Year College decided to raise Home Fees for incoming students to £9,250 per year in line with most Russell Group Universities. Since then College have opted to partake in the TEF and have received a provisional silver award for this year. The government has requested TEF participants to provide a 15-page text submission to demonstrate the quality of teaching at their institution and College invited Imperial College Union to co-author their submission, which Luke and I have now done.

#### c. Union Council

The Union's last Higher Education Funding Policy was created in 2014, instructing the Union to "condemn and campaign against" any process which could lead to the increase of fees or the marketization of education. It predated the 2015 election and development of the TEF, which established a link between teaching quality and the fees an institution can charge. As a result we were left in an uncomfortable position where any efforts made to improve the educational experience of our members (as we are constituted to do) could also be considered as us supporting an increase in fees. This particular situation was brought to a head when we were asked to co-author the College's TEF submission, and as a result an extraordinary meeting of Union Council was called at the beginning of January.

At the extraordinary council meeting Luke and I proposed that it was in our members' interest to co-author the TEF submission to ensure a fair representation of the real educational experience. We also proposed that the current Higher Education Funding policy be reviewed and updated as well as made a defence of why the Union should not partake in the NSS boycott. Our position was endorsed by a majority of Council.

A working group of Council, which Luke and I sit on, will return a new Higher Education Funding Policy to Council in March.

#### d. Political Work

Towards the end of last term I had several conversations with Lord Robert Winston about the HERB, and at the beginning of this year he invited me to attend the first debate at Committee Stage of the HERB in the House of Lords. The main purposes of my visit were: to share the "student perspective" with Lord Winston and others, gain understanding into the process & scope for influencing the Bill, as

well as identifying potentially allies for us to approach. This will be useful should we decide to try and change legislation in the future.

I was pleased to see that many of the Lords were challenging certain aspects of the Bill that students have concerns with, namely international student visas and representation on the Office for Students board, and the number of amendments submitted suggests an appetite for altering the Bill.

#### e. Next Actions

Following the House of Lords visit and conversations with College on the work they have done on the HERB, we are now in a position to approach individual Lords in order to share our views on the Bill.

**Discussion:** Thoughts on the HERB, TEF and national reaction. Advice on influencing political discussion welcomed.

### 2. Alumni

- In line with one of my major manifesto pledges, James and I are working to redevelop Life Membership of the Union.
- The development of Life Membership, and Alumni services in general, is being steered by our Alumni Strategic Accomplishment Squad (SAS), which is a cross-department working group.
- The aim is to develop at least a minimum viable product to be released in time for the end of the academic year.
- Work is focused on lowering the price, improving the purchasing experience & supporting back-office systems, integrating the offer into CSPs, enhancing the marketing and improving the service offer.
- Our aim is to retain recent graduate involvement with the CSPs and the wider Union in general.
- We will look to collaborate with College where appropriate to enhance the experience of Life and Full members.
- I continue to support College's current Alumni/giving events including the development of the first annual giving day.

**Discussion:** In personal experience, what have you received when you join other organisations (social clubs, charities, professional bodies etc.)? What do you think about the member experience of part other organisations? Any good examples? What would be expected of us?

### 3. External Revenue Projects

One of our areas of strategic priority is the development of external revenue sources, in order to reduce our reliance on member-generated income and add value to our members. To enable long-term development, provision has made to increase future Officer Trustee oversight of our Social Enterprises via the DPFS role review. However, in the meantime I have been working together, with Union staff and James, to develop our Online Retail and Sponsorship Offerings.

#### a. Online Retail

- Online Retail currently makes a very small percentage of our total retail revenue.
- Harvard & MIT Cooperative made \$41m revenues & ~\$4m profits in 2014 demonstrating a market for selling branded items beyond membership at top universities.
- Analysis of other university, "competitor" offers needs to be done in more detail, especially focusing on UK universities.

- The global diaspora of potential students, students, friends & family and alumni, as well as the ubiquity of online shopping, suggest there is an (as yet unquantified) demand for a sustainable, global, online shop selling Imperial branded goods.
- Currently, online fulfilment is run out of the South Kensington store on an item-by-item basis. Storage and staffing constraints would quickly limit any increase in sales volume. As such, we are conducting a review of current systems and customer experience, which will make up part of the wider Social Enterprise strategy.
- We are investigating 3<sup>rd</sup> party fulfilment services.
- We would also like to centrally provide a service to supply and sell CU & CSP regalia in order to maximise efficiencies of scale and reduce costs to CSPs.
- College would be keen to see us develop our services/ product ranges to enhance the global brand awareness and to help build an Imperial Community with a strong visual identity.

#### b. Sponsorship Offering

- Sponsorship provides a very lucrative path to fund activities, by leveraging access to our members as well as our respected brand.
- Sponsorship is currently focused on individual CSPs, which has various benefits (learning experience for members, direct contact, boutique service etc.) but also negatives (lack of continuity, lack of professionalism, internal competition).
- Benefits could be gained by improving training and spreading existing best practice between societies.
- We can supplement the current offer with a general Union sponsorship package, external events options and greater CSP coordination. This will maximise our revenues by providing a broad range of opportunities to suit a wide variety of potential sponsors.
- The aim is a seamless system that matches a potential sponsor with the right packages for them and our members.

**Discussion:** Can anyone advice on online retail services? Has anyone experienced sponsoring something from the other side?