



Imperial College Union Board of Trustees

20/02/2019

AGENDA ITEM NO.	
TITLE	GSU Reform
AUTHOR	Rob Tomkies
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	Summary of the formal reform steps taken explicitly for the GSU
PURPOSE	For information
DECISION/ACTION REQUIRED	NA

Graduate Students Union Changes

Rob Tomkies (Union President)

What was the need?

- This year there has been a combined focus between the Union and the GSU to look at different methods of improving the Union offering to graduate students. One section of this has involved looking at the governance structures of the GSU.
- It became apparent that the current structures within the GSU leave increased work load on one or two individuals whilst other positions are elected and then have almost no function at all.
- Areas that we wish to focus on do not have room to grow in the current GSU structure and so these sections have been expanded.
- The existing structure also lead to internal communications issues and bureaucracy with some roles “reporting” through three layers of volunteers before reaching the president.
- Each year the GSU has struggled to secure funds through CSP budgeting – either through a lack of understanding of the process or through the time constraints required in generating a budget being loaded onto 1 individual.

Changes and Reasoning

Role Changes

Academic and Welfare officers increased to allow 1 Research PG and 1 Taught PG rep per Faculty.

- This is to recognise the large difference in challenges, both academic and wellbeing, that each type of student faces and to ensure that they are represented both in the Union and at Faculty meetings.
- These have not been separated into academic and wellbeing yet as the wellbeing rep network has not been expanded into the PG community. At this point Wellbeing reps would have no platform and communication channels to their constituents and so the decision was made that at this point to not split. At a time that the wellbeing reps are ready to expand this structure is intended to be examined again.

Change of the two events officers (Officer and Coordinator) to a team of four “Activities and Events” officers.

- The GSU has struggled historically in event organisation due to the amount of work that needs to be put in by two people to put on events for 10,000 PG students. This has led to a doubling of the team size as well as a strengthening of the connections with the Union events team.
- Changing from purely “Events” to “Activities and Events” was decided to broaden the role and include some of possibilities the removed “Sports Officer” offered – if people want to organise activities such as yoga, puppy petting etc.

Separation of the Communications team and introduction of Specific roles (see below diagram)

- Communicating with the membership is a huge challenge for all areas of the Union. This year the GSU has put real emphasis on increasing the visibility and amount of comms that the GSU puts out. This has had some real success however it has become apparent that this again has put a lot of strain on one or two members of the committee – for this reason the roles have been separated out.

- The team has been separated out to allow greater spread of work for the individuals of the exec as well as allowing the team to contact all areas of the GSU committee (events, exec etc) without having emphasis on just one through working more closely with them.

Introduction of Campus based officers.

- Graduates are considerably more delocalised than most undergrad CU's (with maybe the exception of ICSMSU). Three larger campuses exist which have three larger PG communities – Silwood, Hammersmith and soon to be larger White City.
- These locations already have to varying degrees an active student body (Silwood CU, Hammersmith Student Community) – these officer roles are designed so that communications are maintained with the student body at each location and so that the GSU can support and empower these students as best they possibly can.

Structural Changes

Creation of an Executive Committee

- The previous structure (see below) had a very vertical nature with the President only having two people directly “reporting” into them and increased time being required of the deputies. This led to the president having to support individuals directly and the whole committee being ineffective.
- The executive committee has been created so that a group rather than an individual (the President) have strategic oversight of the activities of the GSU. This enables more effective communication between all areas and all experience levels of the GSU.
- Each member of the executive committee will have a team of people that they work closely with and support as well as the exec.

Creation of Subcommittees

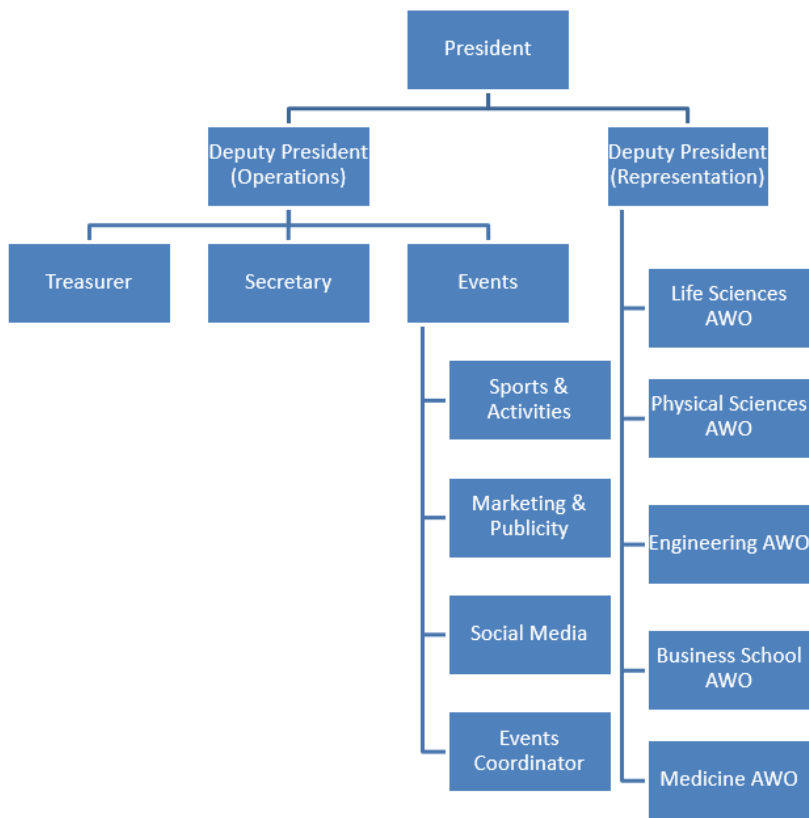
- These have been created to delegate out work load amongst the senior roles of the GSU. Each subcommittee has been constructed with roughly the same amount of hours work going into it from the members and then also with similar role types within so that communication and sharing of best practice is as efficient as possible.

CSP Funding Pot

It has been recognised that each year for various reasons the GSU has not been able to secure substantial funding through the CPS budgeting process. To try and get them “on their feet” after seeing that again this year they were applying for things not grant applicable a £5000 pot has been set up by CSPB that they can apply to throughout next year so that a) the Union will have greater oversight of their activities but more importantly b) they will not be penalised for either lack of experience or lack understanding of the importance of this.

Summary

Existing Structure:



Proposed:

