

Imperial College Union
Minutes of the fifth ordinary Meetings of Union Council
19th January 2021 - 12:00pm – 2:00pm

Present:

| Role | Name |
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| Union Council Chair | Alex Auyang (AA/Chair) |
| Union President | Abhijay Sood (AS) |
| Deputy President (Welfare) | Shervin Sabeghi (SS) |
| Deputy President (Education) | Michaela Flegrova (MF) |
| Deputy President (Clubs & Societies) | Ross Unwin (RU) |
| Deputy President (Finance and Services) | Sam Lee (SL) |
| Arts and Entertainment Sector Chair | India Marsden (IM) |
| BME Officer | Deborah Adegoke (DA) |
| Community and Faith Sector Chair | Joshua Ofengbai (JO) |
| Culture Sector Chair | Tin Hang Un (TU) |
| Ethics and Environment Officer | Stephanie Yeung (SY) |
| Gender Equality Officer | Priantha Pretheshan (PP) |
| GSU President | Zixiao Wang (ZW) |
| GSU Vice President (Representation) | Lintong Li (LL) |
| GSU PGR Academic & Welfare Officer (Engineering) | Abderrahim Boualam (AdB) |
| ICSMSU President | Muntaha Naeem (MN) |
| ICSMSU Academic Chair | Rachel Kwok (RK) |
| Knowledge Sector Chair | Alexander Nielsen (AN) |
| LGBT+ Officer | Keir Logan (KL) |
| RCSU President | Aparna Pillai (AP) |
| Recreation Sector Chair | Adam Turner (AT) |
| RSMSU President | Jasmine Crocker (JC) |
| Sports Sector Chair | Geoffrey Sheir (GS) |
| UG FoM Council Rep | Haider Nazerali (HZ) |
| UG FoM Council Rep | Gabrielle Mathews (GM) |
| UG FoNS Council Rep | Michael Kohn (MK) |
| UG FoNS Council Rep | Susan Rutter (SR) |
| UG FoE Council Rep | Hilliam Tung (HT) |
| UG FoE Council Rep | Olasoji Ajayi (OA) |
| UG FoE Council Rep | James White (JW) |
| PG FoE Council Rep | Ravi Shankar (RS) |
| PG FoNS Council Rep | Ansh Bhatnagar (AnB) |
| PG FoNS Council Rep | Chiara Riedel-Loria (CR-L) |
| PG Non-Faculty Council Rep | Luckme Thakkar (LT) |
| Working Class Officer | Grace Fisher (GF) |

Observers:

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| Felix Editor | Calum Drysdale (CD) |
| Student Trustee | Lloyd James (LJ) |
| Student Trustee | Christopher Carter (CC) |
| Student | Adil Ali (AdA) |

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| Student | Hasan Ahmed (HA) |
| Student | Haris Javed-Ahktar (HJ-A) |
| Student | Muhammad Afzal (MA) |
| Governance Officer | Victoria Agbontaen (VA) |

Apologies:

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| CGCU President | Hayley Wong (HW) |
| International Officer | Isabelle Zhang (IZ) |
| PG FoM Council Rep | Subarna Chakraborty (SC) |

Absent:

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| CGCU Vice President (Wellbeing) | Matthew Scott (MS) |
| CGCU Vice President (Education) | Aleksander Ziolkowski (AZ) |
| Disabilities Officer | Adya Rao (AR) |
| Media Chair | Matej Genci (MG) |
| Mental Health Officer | Lauren Wheeler (LW) |
| ICSMSU Welfare Officer | Natania Varshney (NV) |
| Interfaith Officer | Safi Thanya Siamwalla (SaS) |
| PG FoE Council Rep | Zhongyao Jiang (ZJ) |
| PG FoM Council Rep | Ebenezer Donkor (ED) |
| PG Non-Faculty Council Rep | Sabrina Lui (SL) |
| RCSU Vice President (Education) | Daniyar Ghani (DG) |
| RCSU Vice President (Welfare) | Maria Borc (MB) |
| RSMSU Vice President (Education) | Katie McCann (KM) |
| RSMSU Welfare Officer | Emmeline Poole (EP) |
| Silwood Park President | Conor Nicoll (CN) |
| UG FoE Council Rep | Varun Srivastava (VS) |

| Item | Actions |
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| <p>1. Chair's welcome and Chair's business 1.1. Chair welcomed the Council to the fifth 2020-21 Council Meeting.</p> | |
| <p>2. Apologies: 2.1. Apologies from: Hayley Wong (HW) Isabelle Zhang (IZ) Subarna Chakraborty (SC))</p> | |
| <p>3. Minutes of Previous Meeting 3.1. Chair confirmed with Council if there were any changes required to be made to the minutes. 3.2. No dissensions were put forward. 3.3. Chair confirmed the minutes as accepted as consensus.</p> | |
| <p>4. Action Tracker 4.1. AS informed Council the action points will be addressed and discussed during item 14 as part of the President's report.</p> | |
| Matters for Decision | |
| <p>5. Formalising Amendments 5.1. AnB noted that as the last Council meeting he wanted to submit an amendment but there was no formal procedure, so this purpose of this paper is to formalise the procedure. 5.2. A question was asked by MN whether this paper was to amend the standing order for there to be a formal process whereby amendments to papers are made. AnB confirmed this was correct. 5.3. Chair put the paper to members of Council to vote. The results are as follows: 23 approve and 3 abstain. Paper was therefore passed by Council.</p> | |
| <p>6. Stance of Huawei Deal 6.1. HJ-A gave a brief overview of the paper stating that the Uyghur ethnic minority in China are being subject to human rights abuses and there are reportedly 1 million Uyghurs currently being held in camps against their will, with abuses such as torture, brainwashing and rape. 6.2. Huawei have been accused of being implicated in these human rights abuses including AI technology to track Uyghurs. 6.3. HJ-A said this is relevant for Imperial students directly is because Imperial recently signed a 5-year, £5million deal with Huawei in May 2020. Details of the deal are limited but institutions such as Oxford, MIT and Stanford have cut ties with Huawei. 6.4. HJ-A stated that the College has a relationship review policy for all third-party relationships, but this deal seems to have breached this policy slightly. 6.5. HJ-A stressed that this is not an attack on Chinese students or China in general and the concern lies specifically with the company/deal due to the gravity of the accusations made against Huawei.</p> | |

- 6.6.** HJ-A said he would want the Union to take three main steps; ask the College to release details of the ethical due diligence performed, to recommend to the College to take an active role in condemning the human rights violations that are occurring and to lobby the College to terminate the deal.
- 6.7.** ZW stated that he had spoken with several of his friends from a Chinese background and their opinion is that most of the reporting from the BBC about this issue is fake news and believes this fake news originated from Donald Trump last year due to political conflicts between the US and China.
- 6.8.** ZW added that the Union is a non-political Charity and should not be getting involved with these issues and does not think this is the place for these political discussions.
- 6.9.** ZW expressed that Imperial has many students from all over the world with several different political opinions but the purpose of the Union is to unify students to fight to improve wellbeing and experience of all students instead of dividing the community.
- 6.10.** ZW added that many PG Research students are being funded by Huawei, so if Imperial terminate their partnership with them immediately, how will this funding be covered.
- 6.11.** ZW recommended that HJ-A should protest outside the Chinese embassy which may be more helpful.
- 6.12.** AS said that the College have several deals of this nature and it is good that it had been picked up and brought to Council.
- 6.13.** MK questioned if it were possible to go further and escalate the resolves. MK disagreed with ZW and said that Council is the correct place for these issues to be discussed.
- 6.14.** AN supported the paper and Imperial investing in other firms should be reviewed but that does not mean this paper should not be discussed but could form a precedence for other papers.
- 6.15.** MN added that Council does need to consider not alienating the international and Chinese students it has but not acting would alienate the people who are passionate about this topic.
- 6.16.** MN agreed that there is a wider College problem, but if this specific issue is not dealt with, we risk disillusioning a lot of students and facing external scrutiny.
- 6.17.** OA noted that it is important to separate the allegations made against the Chinese government from Huawei as he perceives this to separate from Huawei itself.

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| <p>6.18. OA added it might set a negative precedence for firms in the future who want to set up contracts with Imperial if there are fears this might be pulled half-way through due to external, political issues.</p> <p>6.19. HJ-A questioned OA on why this type of technology had been made in the first place if one of its key proposes was not to detect different races. Adding that due to the severity of these allegations, Imperial should no way be implicated in supporting such as company.</p> <p>6.20. Chair put the report to members of Council to vote and the results are as follows: 23 approve, 2 abstain and 3 reject. Paper was therefore passed by Council.</p> <p>6.21. ZW expressed his disappointment in the passing of the motion, stating that he joined Council to improve the experiences of students and not to argue political issues. ZW stated that Union Council should remain neutral for controversial political issues and should be bringing students together rather than dividing them based off a difference in political opinions.</p> <p>6.22. ZW decided to resign from his position at Union Council and expressed he will no longer be attending Council meetings but will send a GSU Representative on his behalf.</p> | |
| <p>7. Ratification of Trustees</p> <p>7.1. AS outlined that the Board of Trustees is there to oversee the charity and to hold Senior Management to account etc. AS added that the Board is comprised of appointed and elected Student Trustees, the Officer Trustees and appointed External Trustees. AS note that as some Trustees are leaving the Board due to the end of their three-year term, there was a need to recruit new Trustees to take their positions.</p> <p>7.2. AS added that due to the previous amount of staff/Trustee turnover in the Union, it is valuable for Dot to stay on as an external Trustee to maintain continuity, ICU and ICL knowledge and experience.</p> <p>7.3. GM questioned whether continuity is a strong enough reason for Dot to stay in the role if there is an opportunity for another candidate who is qualified to step into the role. AS explained that Dot has the experience of being on the Board but also the broader experience of being part of the College and having a strong-track record as being an advocate for women.</p> <p>7.4. LJ echoed AS's support of Dot explaining that he has been on the Board for a couple of years and seen the value that Dot adds, particularly from her experience as a member of the College. In terms of capability and experience, Dot is up there with the best candidates that were seen during the appointment interviews.</p> <p>7.5. AT was concerned that once in-person meetings resume, whether the scheduling difficulty would be a challenge. AS said that it is likely at least half of the Board meetings next year will continue to be online.</p> <p>7.6. Chair put the report to members of Council to vote to re-ratify Dot Griffiths and the results are as follows:</p> | |

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| <p>23 approve, 3 abstain and 1 reject. Paper was therefore passed by Council.</p> <p>7.7. AS noted that 6 candidates were interviewed for the one external Trustee vacancy. 3 were appointable and the feeling of the panel was that Dan Wagner was the most suitable candidate.</p> <p>7.8. Dan demonstrated key insight as to what the student experience is and AS believes he would hold the management of the Union to account as it is important that their work is scrutinised.</p> <p>7.9. LJ added that Dan demonstrated a clear understanding of SU issues and had done much more background research than other candidates and was passionate about the position.</p> <p>7.10. AS noted that with the Chair recruitment, Council input would be valuable in understanding what type of person students would like to see in that role. AS added there has been concerns around diversity on the Board and staff team, specifically around gender and racial diversity.</p> <p>7.11. Chair put the report to members of Council to vote to ratify Dan Wagner and the results are as follows: 25 approve and 2 abstain. Paper was therefore passed by Council.</p> | |
| <p>8. Vote of No Confidence</p> <p>8.1. The student has decided to resign from the role, so no further discussion was required.</p> | |
| <p>Matters for Report/Discussion</p> | |
| <p>9. The Working Together Task Group</p> <p>9.1. MF outlined the paper, highlighting there has been a group put together, the purpose of which is to investigate how we can work together better, focusing on the work culture at Imperial.</p> <p>9.2. MF added there will be an external facilitator appointed who will be consulting with various other staff members in the College.</p> <p>9.3. AS said that this group is part of the Colleges response to the bullying scandal as they have not taken the decisive action that staff and student might expect.</p> <p>9.4. AT questioned if the UCU is not engaging in this exercise, will it be Management and the Union working together without staff. AT added that an alternative joint proposal with the UCU should be considered alongside this.</p> <p>9.5. MF stated that just because UCU Members are not involved does not mean there will not be staff participation.</p> <p>9.6. LJ agreed with the principal of maintaining a united front with the UCU and is concerned with the idea of there being staff involvement except for the UCU as it would not be acceptable for the College to exclude the Union in student-based issues.</p> | |
| <p>10. DPE Report</p> <p>10.1. MF said she has been focused on trying to push the College to finalise the package of no-detriment measures. MF has also been</p> | |

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| <p>working on a student spaces consultation and repurposing of these spaces.</p> <p>10.2. Chair put the report to members of Council to vote. The results are as follows: 26 approve.</p> <p>10.3. Paper was approved by Council.</p> | |
| <p>11. DPW Report</p> <p>11.1. SS highlighted that a new Advice and Representation Manager has been recruited and will be starting in May. She is experienced in the sector and will add a lot of value to the Union.</p> <p>11.2. Chair put the report to members of Council to vote. The results are as follows: rent waivers will be extended till the 8th of March, adaptations made to halls of residence will stay the same.</p> <p>11.3. SS noted he is working on bringing back Rep Network newsletters, Rep of the month etc. which he has not been able to focus heavily on during the year.</p> <p>11.4. Chair put the report to members of Council to vote. The results are as follows: 25 approve. Paper was approved by Council.</p> | |
| <p>12. DPCS Report</p> <p>12.1. RU took his report as tabled noting that CPS's are in the peak of budgeting season.</p> <p>12.2. HT questioned if there was a staff member on the ICU CSP 3-year development plan overseeing the project. RU stated that this will be carried out by the Head of Membership Services along with the Student Development and opportunities team.</p> <p>12.3. RU added that he has only stipulated what the first year looks like and included some general objectives for what years 2 and 3 may look like so a future DPCS can contribute to key milestones.</p> <p>12.4. Chair put the report to members of Council to vote. The results are as follows: 24 approve and 2 abstain.</p> <p>12.5. Paper was therefore accepted by Council.</p> | |
| <p>13. DPFS Report</p> <p>13.1. SL confirmed that H&S policies had been approved as well as the sponsorship policies as it allows for more oversight on what the process looks like.</p> <p>13.2. SL noted he is currently writing a project plan for how user groups will function, sponsorship reviews and a refund policy for memberships due to inactivity caused by the pandemic.</p> <p>13.3. AnB asked when the UCH redev would commence. SL explained that due to misalignment between College plans and students plans for the venue which is causing a delay in the redevelopment. There is a potential for it to happen over Summer or Easter 2022.</p> <p>13.4. Chair put the report to members of Council to vote. The results are as follows: 26 approve.</p> <p>13.5. Paper was therefore accepted by Council.</p> | |

14. President Report

- 14.1. AS highlighted that OfS have initiated an investigation into the College's process whereby Alice Gast and Muir Sanderson were held to account.
- 14.2. AS noted this had been discussed at a recent College Council meeting but expressed disappointment in this issue not being discussed at the governing body of the University until he instigated this discussion.
- 14.3. MN asked whether Alice Gast is on a fixed-term contract with the College. AS stated that this is correct, but it is unlikely her contract will be renewed.
- 14.4. AN questioned who it was that reached a decision on Muir's and Alice's consequence of the bullying scandal. AS said the decision was made by a disciplinary panel, comprised of three members of College Council who were selected on the basis of availability which did not include the Chair.
- 14.5. LJ said during his meeting with Senior College staff, he believed that they felt the reputational damage to the College would be minimal.
- 14.6. AS clarified it was agreed three years ago that the Union should have a petition system, but the specified implementation was not agreed.
- 14.7. AS added that his project work has been delayed due to several short-term issues as well as the Felix review project.
- 14.8. Chair put the report to members of Council to vote. The results are as follows:
26 approve.
Paper was therefore accepted by Council.

Any Other Business

AS encouraged Council to vote and obtain a postal ballot for the upcoming location elections in London and the UK in three months.