

Clubs, Societies and Projects Board

Minutes

14th December Meeting, 6-8pm, held in Blackett Lecture Theatre 2, Imperial, South Kensington

Attendance

Group	Name	Role
Imperial College Union	Christian Cooper (CC) (<i>Chair</i>)	Deputy President (Clubs and Societies)
	Lucy Brown (LB)	Activities Manager
	Patrice Mighton, <i>until item 5</i>	Activities Coordinator
	Hannah Corsini (HC) (<i>Secretary</i>)	Democracy and Representation Assistant
City & Guilds College Union	Isaac Lo	Clubs & Socs Chair
Imperial College School of Medicine Students' Union	Arjun Narendran	Clubs & Socs Chair
	Jemima Russell	MG Treasurer
Culture	Sheshpriya Gadiya	Chair
Sports	Junior Mbah	Chair
	Teodor Tiryaki	Treasurer
	Pip Moss	VC Team Field
Recreation	Enzo Amaral	Chair
	Thurston Blount	Treasurer
	Ewan Badcoe	Secretary
RSM	Phoebe Houldsworth-Bianek	VP (Clubs & Societies)
	Hettie Holmes	Treasurer
RCSU	Deniz Beydagi	VP (Clubs & Societies)
Arts & Ents	Nathalie Tedfors Lindell	Chair
	Tom Gordon	Treasurer
	Ben Bishop	VC Music (Instrumental)
	Pip Moss	VC Media
Community	Shahmir Durrani	Chair

Minutes

1. Welcome

2. Minutes of the previous meeting / actions arising / confidential items

PM sports role required. — Added to minutes.

DE was not listed on the minutes. — Added.

NTL incorrectly listed as NTW at one point. — Amended.

Planning started for next term's **arts show** — wording change required.

Minutes were approved, with changes, by consensus.

3. Reports/updates

a. Chairs report

Student experience fund is being released this year and has increased from the previous year. CUs and cultural groups will have big flagship events in January. Split payments will hopefully be implemented in around Jan/Feb. Funds can potentially be used in the Union's shop.

Sustainability framework is being co-written with students.

In Term 2 after annual budgeting, CC will be running sessions with CSPs that want to expand what they do and reach new members. Be prepared for comms and if people have groups they think would be suitable, push them forward.

The University is launching a learning well programme — this will involve group discussions and lectures on improving how students learn, including balancing extracurriculars and uni work. The panel will be chaired by wellbeing and CC will also be on this. They need extra students, so anyone interested should see CC in the break or at the end of this meeting, or pass on to anyone they think could be interested.

Consultation is undergoing for annual budgeting.

Last official pay run went out today so a mini pay-run will happen on Monday 16th December 2024. Expenditure needs to be approved by end of day 13th December 2024. CC will be pushing anything in his inbox through, and attendees to push anything less than 1K through or contact him otherwise.

b. Activities team updates

The deadline has now passed for risk assessments for January events.

Risk assessments are looking good on the whole but some have been sent which are blank. The Activities Team has been asked to be stricter on those which are blank or have very few lines — these will just be rejected rather than being delivered feedback.

Clarification on the summer activity closure is being sought for before the end of term. The Union has moved over to a new insurance provider who tried to push the end of CSP activity at the end of July. This has been pushed to 31st August by the Activities Team, this is still being finalised. September activities not allowed to go ahead currently, but the Activities Team is trying to resolve this.

Some trips took place in September 2024, and for every single one (less than 10) there was an issue with finances due to year timing. AT is trying to mitigate this, but it is a reason not to hold in September.

ADF update

CC and Patrice had issues with some applications as some committees were copying from previous applications and other committees.

ADF and trip committee will be moved into an in-person meeting as it may be more helpful to have in-person discussions. General consensus that this would be good.

NTL raised that they need to decide how in-depth the sessions will go and whether or not they will decide in-person if trips or activities will be funded.

CC said that the outcome will be decided in the meeting with regards to the amount of money. CC will send out options for in-person meetings but if these are difficult for people to make, they will do it on Teams.

PM said overall, this will help in terms of reducing deferring and making decisions on time — outcomes will be sooner for teams. Previously, they have noticed not everyone is putting their notes and comments in the sheets when they are doing round deadlines making it harder to get decisions out on time, so from now on after 2 rounds if no notes then it will be decided that people will no longer be part of the committee

c. MG/CU updates

Sports

- ICC held
- Meeting held with Nick about reintroducing sports colours
- Process of planning Fight Night and January ACC

Arts & Entertainments

- Board meeting held today. Update given on Great Hall. There have been some issues with comms around room bookings on Great Hal, and a meeting will be held to improve these comms.
- Meeting with dance chairs held.
- Arts night booked for 7th February
- A point was raised in the board meeting about rudeness from Union security, especially those at Union Hall as not all hall attendees have CIDs. One Chair was called stupid by security. Arts and Ents would like some procedure with Union security. CC agreed and said people should pass on any experiences to him and LB. LB agreed and said union staff have also been spoken to rudely and security is currently being reviewed, as they are external staff and not their own. LB recommended that when shows are happening — if it's possible, use the back entrance on Level 1 — this is not ideal but this is a short-term alternative option. In the long-term they will be trying to make security work. LB also recommended that actual instances should be put through complaints to support conversations with individuals.

- PM raised that lists have been sent to activities which has been sent to security managers but never got past these, and that Level 1 may not be ideal as Royal Albert Hall security will get involved.

Recreation

- Main issues include the scrapping of KYW and minibuses, but everything else has been running smoothly.
- Some societies have been frozen and people do not understand this.

Culture

- No update.
- There have been some issues with the CGCU in holding an international event, so Culture will be trying to run this.

Community

- No major updates

Knowledge

- Not present

ICSMSU

- Celebrations with Academics and Arts Dinner held.
- Big events for the end of term planned such as UH night, carol service
- Socs meeting and year talks with Lilia will be held next term.

RCSU

- Welfare events have been held — small events
- Interdepartmental hackathon — lots of collaboration, but there were security issues. Held in main campus. Bookings with the union had an issue — other 24 hour events were kicked out by security and had to try and find other room. AT said they are experiencing issues with communication from university security. This has been flagged and is being picked up by a senior manager. Some rooms were being double-booked.

CGCU

- Welfare station giving out sanitary products has been held. CC said this is good but the uni should be providing this in the toilets and to raise this. PM said there are none in Skempton.
- International footy wins
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RSMU

- Good events have been held.
- February match planning is underway.

- One club which has only had feedback on Annual Risk Assessment recently — RSM hockey. LB said this is as all sports have to go through a secondary review and that there are 10 outstanding socs which are awaiting secondary review.

Annual Budgeting

As per the previous CSPB: CC has interviewed college CFO, talked to finance, done a full sector review and analysis. He has analysed the current process and narrowed down his recommendations.

Concluded the main changes needed are to: responsibilities, timeline, grant allocation. This has been agreed by senior managers.

Responsibilities

Staff need to play a greater operational role, but students should retain governance control.

Timeline

Timeline should be pushed later in the academic year, mirroring what other SUs do. No other SUs do January. Budgets are started in May by the SU so a January budget is not reflective of this.

Grant allocation

More specific principles for grant allocation should exist and grant allocation principles should align with ICU strategy.

Discussion

Timeframes

Two options

1. CSPs submit a budget at the end of term 2 and grant is allocated in term 3
2. CSPs submit budget in term 3 and grant is allocated at the end of term 3 or over the summer break.

Feedback:

General consensus was a dislike of Option 2, as societies don't respond over spring break, and this would make it hard to form a cohesive budget. Similar issues would be faced over summer break. June is also thesis time for final years, which would disproportionately impact society Chairs. In the case of appeals, it would make sense for the same committee who made the budget to be around for the appeals.

It was questioned as to why the start of term 2 (current timeline) is so bad. CC responded that the ICU does not have enough information from Finance and Risk as they evaluate budgets in March. There is more information later on. Additionally, students tend to do exams in January so the budgets they submit are poorer in quality. Budgets in January are based off of the previous year's activity, so in

effect the budgets they are submitting have a 2 year difference between the year they are based on and the year they will be for.

LB also commented that a lot of bigger activity is in Term 2 so not having information on this and attempting to make a budget is difficult. LB said that this is being done to improve the conditions for CSPs mainly, less emphasis on those who are allocating grants.

It was asked if there would be a downside as to having Option 1 over a longer period of time. CC said that there is not really one, but by forcing students to do it over a shorter period, MGs and ICU staff are able to have more targeted sessions with them and better able to coordinate schedules. The ICU are recruiting a permanent funding coordinator who will help with this.

It was also raised that clubs who get coaches to Harlington tend not to get an invoice until later on and that there is a lack of transparency on how much this costs. CC said that CSPs should reach out to Move Imperial, and that this would be a point in favour towards Option 2, but by March there should generally be an idea of what will be happening over summer.

CC summarised by saying that the decision would require CSPB and Finance & Risk approving and the systems team implementing changes. In the CSPB meeting in January, this will be open for end notes but there will be no final decision, just final amendments. The decision should be towards the end of January, and then CC will reach out to Chairs.

Defining core activity

ICU has the core values of integrity, inclusivity, innovation. Its core mission is to foster community and belonging, which particularly relates to CSPs.

CC would like this to underpin the new grant allocation framework. Every CSP has different needs but there are some core activities.

Feedback:

Sports

PM asked for specialist training to be added as eg. American Football has to have first aiders on-site.

Theodore asked for flagship event eg. Snowsports, BUCs etc. CC said this would be classed as a trip.

Action: CC will examine this and determine whether or not summer activities count as core activity

Asked what NGB affiliations covers — CC said this is an umbrella for all sorts of different affiliations and includes club affiliations and sending people to tournaments.

JM asked if there is a reason why welfare is not under sports. CC said he would change this to community and belonging events, as realistically everyone should be doing welfare.

Performance

NTL asked if unique facilities could explicitly include college spaces, and if performance activity includes money for licenses. CC said that the activities are a build-up to a yearly performance and that if they were being equitable they would fund 1 big performance per year for each society. NTL said that the phrasing should be “at least one”.

LB said that principles around core activity link to annual budgeting and that this is the context of the budget. If a budget is being reviewed against these principles then it needs to be linked to a principle or it cannot be funded.

PM said it should perhaps be performance opportunities as a lot of societies are doing multiple events.

Arjun asked for transport consideration for ICSM and Arts and Ents as movement of CX equipment etc.

CC says that there has been a lot of debates around funding in the past as there were no principles around what core activity was — just “need” and “reach.”

LB said that when people are looking at this and pitching options, they need to consider whether or not it allows them to do what the society is built to do. CC said that performance opportunities doesn't just cover the venue it covers all costs of the performance, including movement of CX equipment.

Clarification was required on equipment as to whether it means equipment hire or the equipment itself. CC said it is anything necessary to the society, so both.

PM said that if uniforms are listed under sports, they should be listed under performances. CC deleted uniforms as part of sports.

It was raised that there may be a blurring of boundaries with some CSPs as to which category they would fall into. LB said every group is aligned to one of these categories and are marked on this criteria. CC said that there would not be much difference anyway

Theo asked how society debt or profit will affect this. CC said core activity will decide what grants they get but debt will not be a factor.

Hobbies

PM asked for the question mark to be removed for unique facilities, and for specialist training to be added for hobbies as some societies need specialist training, like PhotoSoc for chemicals.

CC said that for performance, sports specialist training is needed to actually do it, but that in this case most socs do not need specialist training — there would just be societies.

PM said that specialist training sometimes has not been approved in annual budgets, so there should be a line in the report which says that any specialist training which is required will be funded,

It was asked whether volunteering socs would qualify as hobbies, and if so, if they should come under transport. CC said these would come under Culture & Community.

Exploration

Some need venue hire and college space but as long as exceptions are granted for this then fine.

Academic

It was asked if flagship events covers all expenses. CC said that most academic groups do one big conference or hackathon and that for equitability, socs should be provided with funding for one big event or monthly smaller events.

It was raised that DepSocs should be in Academic Socs and should have flagship events as core activity too. CC said that most DepSocs just run alcohol-based events as their flagship events. LB said that this is a problem for academic socs too as a lot of these flagship events are also quite alcohol-based.

CC said that flagship events will not be stopped but there will not be grants for these. Events which are more for the benefit of non-Imperial students and are more about alcohol / food then these should not be granted. CC said they would consider this under core activities but there would need to be limits. CC will count up how much each column costs in terms of CSP budget and if over 425K then it will be decided what weighting is.

It was raised that some academic socs have equipment which needs to be in storage. There is some free university storage but this may not be enough.

Culture and communities

PM said that flagship events are core as they have soc members for this but lots of these are funded by external groups, so not necessarily core to the budget. It was also raised that ticket prices also tend to be too high for students if these socs are self-sufficient which alienates people from these events.

ICSMU agreed that alcohol consumption events do not necessarily align with ICU values, but raised that Bottle Match, Silfest, STFYP are core activities. CC said that here the funding is for the sport and making these more accessible. LB said that the Activities Team would take this away and make sure these events are covered within core activities.

Storage space necessary for sports, performance and hobbies whilst not for the others.

CUs and DepSocs

General consensus is that this is okay for CC to take away

Roles and responsibilities

CC introduced the Responsibilities Framework. The ICU would like to introduce a Grant Committee accountable for budgeting principles — these will scrutinise everything.

It was asked who the Grant Committee would be, and if over several years the grant committee will lose their understanding of the individual societies.

It was also asked if clarification could be given on the difference between responsible and accountable on the Responsibilities Framework. CC explained that "accountable" is who is responsible when things go wrong, "responsible" is who does the day-to-day.

The Activities Team will become more accountable on budget creation. Appeals will be on CSPB too, but load will be spread so less time on everyone.

Timeline and grant allocation principles will apply to this framework.

CSPB burden around budgeting has been put on permanent staff who are paid for this work so students get to do more of the student leadership.

Option 1

CSPB do nothing. Grant committee introduced. All of the initial approval and allocation is done by the Grant Committee.

General consensus is this is bad.

Option 2

Budgeting committee recommends changes to grant framework, CSPB approves. CSPB lead sessions per management group of each stream's budget development. Budgeting committee sign off on grant amount.

CC thinks the workload here is more balanced and more transparent.

Option 3

Same as Option 2 but CSPs only budget for their core expenditure before asking for the grant and then for any ad hoc or for-profit events. When they get this grant, there are an addition of budget development sessions after grant allocation.

CC raised issues around compliance and financial accuracy.

Theo asked if core expenditure covers maintenance costs. CC said that this is the grant allocation costs — membership costs not considered. Membership target and what is core to the society will be told to the grant allocation team and then there will be an appeals process. The society will have a fixed membership fee or tiered membership fee as a result of this. He said it would address equity issues and make budgeting more efficient as there would be less to consider in terms of Christmas dinners, ad hoc events etc.

PM asked if initial budgets people submit would not have any expenditure on and is concerned that this would leave CSPs with incomplete budgets going into the next year, as if a committee is not good and does not develop a budget then the next committee is in jeopardy.

CC said there would be one of two funding models: *core and non-core are self-sufficient*, or *non-core subsidises core*. Non-core activities would be a deficit made up in membership models.

If there are issues with over-inflating, then some people may not put non-core in their budget, but the following year would be allocated a smaller grant. LB raised that grant committee being permanent staff means they would see this over subsequent years and would have more time to look into every single individual case.

Option 4

Similar to Option 3 except CSPB considers appeals — on the same basis as they usually are.

Option 5

Joint appeals panel in which CSPB and Grant Committee are joined together — opt-in members of CSPB. The benefits include transparency but less burden on CSPB.

It was asked that if a CSP has enough money to self-sustain then if they could put in a DMF — CC said a DMF can only be used if it is saved for a legitimate expense, and that this is so membership models can be justified.

It was asked how it would be decided who of the CSPB would be on the panel. CC said that CSPB own governance around grants and would be deciding principles, around Jan/Feb. The Grant Committee will be chaired by CC, and will have LB, coordinators and someone from finance. It would be an opt-in and chairs from CSPB would be talked to first. The budgeting committee would not have students in it, because it is meant to be taking the burden away from students, but this is open to discussion.

PM said removing students from the decision-making process goes against the core of the students' union. LB said that CC is the elected representative for students. PM said that CC is an impartial DPCS but not all DPCSs will be, and that engagement in CSPB is higher than engagement in SU elections. CC said that this is why students will be allowed to run the appeals. PM said decisions would be too affected by staff make-up and that students do not like the union. CC said that ICU is currently very student-led and this will still be a student-led model.

LB agreed and said that there are too many hours spent by CSPB on budgeting.

CC said that last year not many MGs and CUs did the work and that most of the burden was on him and the DPFS. With this committee, there would be a document with all the rules CSPB set, so there would be a student-created doctrine that the grant committee would abide by. CSPs could then appeal this on their own time.

PM said that she understands less pressure on student volunteers but that the part she enjoys is the operational part. Last year in the budgeting meetings, staff overruled what Arts and Ents were saying, and that this change would set a precedent for CSPB being constantly overruled by staff and there needs to be some student representation on grants committees.

Theo said that trying to explain to union staff how societies work and how budgets would impact is difficult. Current model is more of a two-way conversation but that the new model would shift the power to staff too much. CC said any budgeting development would be done by CSPs and CSPB together and so that when they get to the decision it would just be a yes or no, and agreed that there could be some student representation on the panel.

Arjun commented that there is an expectation on CSPB to put aside hours of time for budgeting and they sign up for it. CC agreed that operational work is part of the sign-up, but there is way too much

of it at the moment and that student volunteers could do more on representing students and talking to them rather than arguing over minutiae of budgets.

PM said that with the democracy review the SU is already moving away from operational control and that it is good for the DPCS to spend time representing students, but that some student volunteers represent students best in operational roles and that running campaigns is not best for everyone. PM thinks it is a dangerous move to start removing all operational roles for student volunteers. CSPB represents student volunteers for the SU and it would be a mistake to exclude students who can answer specific questions as they know the experiences.

CC said that the ICU needs to listen to students, but that this should happen earlier — not in the room where budgets are being decided, and instead when budgets are being generated. CC says it is unproductive when MGs are fighting between each other for money and that this should be a discussion at the soc level.

NTL said that even small budget changes a big difference for societies and that advocacy for societies, for MGs, comes largely in the annual budget.

CC said this is unfinished and will not be signed off today. In his opinion, that roles have become more representative and less operational over 6 years of being at Imperial but society appeals have increased. He believes that this is not fighting for the benefit for everyone but for the benefit of the societies, and that fighting should not occur between management groups.

JM said that because we could adjust how much CSPs ask for, CSPs may get their core activity perfect but then may face unprecedented costs and if there will be funding for this.

CC clarified that ADF will grant money and will not be funded off scraps. 425K given to CSPs which is a lot higher than other unions, and some reserves. ADF and grant are CSP money. Trips is independent money that CSPB administers and Harlington is independent money.

General consensus is that Option 5 is the right direction to go in, but there is a big disagreement about who does which. CC said budgeting committee make up will not be decided today.

4. Any other business

Minibuses

Minibus forum will be held in January everyone should have an invite. There will be minibus registration for entirety of term 2, and there are only 3 minibuses currently but there will be more later.

End of meeting.