

**Imperial College Union
Governance & Membership Sub-Committee**

DRAFT Minutes / 6 September 2023 held at 12.30 in Sherfield and via MS Teams

Trustees Present

Dr Phil Power (PP) in the Chair	Camille Boutrolle (CB)
Prof Dot Griffiths (DG) – from Item 3	Anthea MacIntosh-LaRocque (AML)
Nathalie Podder (NP)	Christian Oldfield (CO)
Yi Yang (YY) – from Item 5	Jane Coulson (JC)

Staff In Attendance

Clem Jones (CJ)	
Cat Turhan (CT)	Tom Newman (TN)– from Item 3

1. Introduction and Apologies

PP welcomed everyone to the meeting. Noted DG, TN and YY would be late due to clashes.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting & Matters Arising

23 November 2022

PP presented the draft minutes of the previous meeting.

- i. NP raised that the minuting of TN's suggestion under 5.iv that "the RO reserves the right to suspend elections for any reason" could be more accurately be minuted as TN suggesting than the RO reserves the right to suspend elections in exceptional circumstances. CJ noted that the preceding inclusion of the phrase "words to the effect of" sought to indicate this, and that, indeed, in the subsequently drafted rules for LE23 the wording referred to "the right to suspend the elections in the event of a circumstance beyond the Union's control". Agreed to clarify this minute.

The Committee approved the draft minutes to be an accurate record, subject to the above.

Matters Arising

Noted that the Returning Officer (RO) for Leadership Elections 2023 (LE23) had set the rules, taking into account the Committee's recommendations. Noted that there were no instances in LE23 or Summer Elections 2023 (SE23) requiring the Committee to meet. PP thanked the teams who had worked on these elections.

3. Chair's Actions

PP noted that he had been asked to approve some Chair's Actions, regarding member suspensions. CJ noted that, at the May Board of Trustees meeting, an update to the Discipline Byelaw had been approved, allowing the Union President to suspend members if required during an investigation as long as the Governance & Membership Chair is informed (who can overturn the decision), which should reduce the number of Chair's Actions required in future.

CJ noted there had been two suspensions at the request of the College, and one Union decision to suspend a member whilst a case was referred to the College.

- i. NP asked if suspensions are subject to periodic reviews. PP noted that in the past they haven't been, as suspensions have been linked to an investigation of specific allegations and are then lifted/sanctions are applied based on the outcome of the investigation. PP suggested that some form of review every few months regarding where cases may be sensible. CB indicated being open to this but queried what timeframe would be suitable. NP noted the College has a timeframe specified for interim suspensions.

Action: Investigate College timeframe for interim suspensions and consider how often the Union should review suspensions.

DG and TN joined the call.

CJ noted that there are College resource limitations at present regarding how quickly College can progress investigations, which can affect the review of suspensions. CT noted that the College's student casework team is expanding which may ameliorate this in future.

The Committee noted the Chair's Actions taken.

4. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest / Identification of Confidential Business

Noted Officer Trustees and Student Trustees on the Committee all necessarily have a potential/real Conflict of Interest to declare relating to Item 5, as they are eligible to nominate themselves as candidates in union elections this academic year.

CT noted that Lucy Gill, the proposed RO for Leadership Elections 2024 (LE24), is someone she knows as a personal friend outside of work in addition to being a sector colleague, but they are not a familial relation.

5. Appointment of Returning Officers / Election Rules for 2023-2024

CT presented paper GM/23-24/01.

Appointment of Returning Officers

The Committee approved the proposed RO/DRO appointments for the 2023-2024 elections.

CJ noted that Byelaw K suggests Representatives to Council (RtCs) should be elected in an election with a member of the Union as RO, however, in recent years RtCs have been included in the online Autumn Elections, for which the eVoting platform requires a member of staff to be designated as RO. CJ suggested that the requirement to have a Union member as RO for RtC elections may be a legacy from when such elections were held offline/overseen by students out of office hours. PP suggested adopting what the Union had done previously for electing the RtCs this year and then correct the Byelaw in due course.

Action: Draft updates to Byelaw K.

Election Rules

- i. DG asked if candidates for the Working Class Officer position would have less resources available to spend on their campaign. CJ noted that the campaign spend limit for Liberation and Community Officers (LCOs) has been £25 in the past. NP noted that the Union has only offered candidate spend *reimbursement* to candidates for Officer Trustee (OT) positions in the past rather than for LCO

positions. CT suggested she look into whether any alternatives would be possible and report back to the committee.

Action: CT to report back to Committee in due course.

- ii. AML raised an inconsistency where Rule 12 and 13 say “may not” rather than “must not” and queried if there was a reason why these requirements sounded less obliging than others. CJ suggested this may simply be inconsistent wordsmithing. CT supported recommending “must not” to the RO instead.
- iii. NP queried if the UMO student post room mentioned in Rule 10 exists. CO noted he believes it refers to the student common room in SAF, next to the office for the ICSMSU President. CT suggested this could be made clearer.
- iv. JC noted that the term “lecture shout outs” in Rule 4 could be clearer. CJ and CT agreed that this and “lecture chat functions” may not be the clearest of terms, and could be clarified that they refer to announcements in lectures and digital chat functions.
- v. CO asked if use of Constituent Union (CU) logos is prohibited, proposing that it should be allowed as it is a key communication tool if running for a CU position. CJ stated that the longstanding prohibition from using the Union’s logo (apart from the Elections Banner) is presumably to stop candidates from using low quality resolution versions/resized versions of the logo which may Impair the Union’s brand, and CU logos are not mentioned. CO suggested that acceptable/official versions of the CU logos could be made available for candidates to use. PP proposed leaving the rule wording as is but suggested speaking to Marketing regarding what is feasible to provide.

Action: Speak to Marketing about CU logos

The Committee agreed to recommend (subject to incorporating the revisions above), the proposed Rules for this year’s elections to the Returning Officers of those elections.

6. Election Dates

CJ presented paper GM/23-24/02.

The Committee agreed to recommend the proposed Election Dates to the Returning Officers of this academic year’s elections.

7. Complaints and Disciplinary Updates

CJ presented paper GM/23-24/03.

Role Appointments

- i. AML asked if the proposed appointment of CJ as Complaints Officer referred to him personally or as the postholder of a specific job role, and whether the appointment as Complaints Officer should be for a fixed period. CJ offered to leave the room for this discussion, but no desire was expressed for this. CT noted that CJ is on secondment to an Interim role and the Union’s Senior Management Team (SMT) are considering where the governance function of the Union sits operationally. AML wondered whether at some point the appointment would need to be amended to refer to a particular role. CT agreed and suggested that this could be clarified over this academic year.

Action: Clarify whether the Complaints Officer appointment should be to the postholder of a given Union staff role rather than to an individual personally.

Governance & Membership Sub-Committee approved the proposed appointments to roles required in the Statutory Complaints and Members' Discipline Procedures.

Summary of 2022-23 Cases

PP noted this was the first time the Union had provided a summary of cases and therefore no historical data existed for reference.

- ii. CO suggested there should be a real effort to increase communication of these processes to encourage students to utilise them, so students feel comfortable to come forward (to report discipline breaches) and so the Union has a true reflection of students' opinions and can target change (in response to complaints). CT suggested that this should be embedded in training for reps and CSP leaders.

Action: Add to training.

- iii. AML noted that internal recommendations were made to address the issues raised in one complaint and asked if these had been actioned. TN noted he would need to check the extent that processes have changed and whether that's resulted in the desired changes based on the recommendations, but noted that report was shared with the relevant team who then made changes to the relevant processes. AML suggested there could be a log of what actions have been undertaken to follow up on recommendations. TN agreed that a tracker would be helpful. CT noted that some cases descriptions, recommendations, or logs of actions may need to be generalised in order to avoid identifying individuals where matters are personal, sensitive or confidential, however, this would be done with as much transparency as possible. JC also noted this would help with setting precedent and for people to be able to understand/refer back to previous cases that might have echoes of new ones that come up, in order to make sure that the Union is being consistent, even if the personnel may change. CT suggested we could also report on the time it takes to complete a complaint.

Action: CJ capture required information for report at start of next academic year.

The Committee noted the update.

8. AOB

TN noted he had feedback from trustees who are asked to be on disciplinary panels, and the feedback has been around increasing training and support to help people to feel that they have the right tools and knowledge to be able serve on panels and be effective on them. TN noted this was planned to be developed so that trustees have this knowledge ahead of serving on panels.

PP thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.