Imperial College Union
Board of Trustees / 29 July 2026

Officer Trustee End of Year Reflections

Author: Nico Henry (Union President)
Purpose: To note the outgoing reflections of the 2025/26 Officer Trustees.
Action: To note

1. Union President – Nico Henry

It's been a productive year for the Union, balancing proactive priorities with significant reactive challenges. Alongside responding to emerging issues, we have strengthened the Union's influence, delivered measurable improvements for students and laid strong foundations for future teams.

Student Voice: Imperial ranked second in the Russell Group and first in London for Student Voice in the NSS, with a 4.6% increase placing us 13th of 153 higher education institutions. This follows consecutive improvements of 50 places last year and a further 25 places this year. The Students' Union question also increased by 4.7%, rising 30 places.

Influence: We strengthened the Union's position as a trusted partner within Imperial through constructive engagement with senior leaders, staff and independent Council members. This secured Union involvement in every university leadership interview, improved consultation processes and created more opportunities for students to engage directly with university leadership. We also contributed to major discussions on chaplaincy, White City, property development and Imperial's approach to fossil fuel partnerships.

Externally, we established new relationships with UKRI, bringing the student voice into conversations where students' unions have not traditionally been represented. The London Weighting campaign reached *Wonkhe*, *Times Higher Education* and *Research Professional News*, contributing to wider national discussion on postgraduate researcher experience. We also established regular meetings with TfL. Within the past month, this has already resulted in Santander Cycles introducing a monthly student discount for the first time, allowing students to access the scheme for £15 per month instead of only through an annual membership.

Artificial Intelligence: A significant focus during the final term was horizon scanning on AI. I encouraged the university to address what I described as the "builder's blind spot": ensuring students developing AI also receive practical education on its safety, ethics and societal implications.

Project delivery: The PGT guarantor scheme is close to completion, with thanks to Phil for his support. We also strengthened our partnership with the Property team and increased affordable housing opportunities. While work on student jobs is around 12 months behind the original timetable, foundations have been established and university departments remain keen to recruit students through the Union. Discussions with the People Team on Graduate Teaching Assistants in light of the Employment Rights Bill will continue. The commercial team is also well placed to continue work with the Property team to maximise Union space usage, including Metric

Sustainability: We improved communication with students around sustainability and operational decisions, building greater understanding of initiatives such as bar operations and waste reduction. Alongside reducing our footprint, we increased our handprint, our positive impact through education for sustainability advocacy and collaboration with the university's Sustainability team on its new strategy.

Looking ahead: I encourage future Officers to continue embedding meaningful student representation in major developments, particularly at White City. Continue working postgraduate experience, the Union's digital experience, and in-person consent education. Continue monitoring AI's impact on

learning, graduate employment, ethics and sustainability. Keep communicating the student benefit behind commercial decisions. And consider how the union can further support into disciplinary collaboration, and develop future leaders and changemakers.

2. Deputy President (Welfare) – Anson To

Objective	Description/Progress
1. Food Prices on campus	Description: Lobby the university to provide food options at student-friendly prices. Review their opening hours for students staying late on campus. Progress - Complete. There are now £5 dinners at the library cafe from 5-8pm. For continuity, I've sent suggestions to our Working Class Network Officers on ways to keep track of prices and recruit students to join the network.
2. Review of common room provision across departments	Description: Provision on/ quality of Common Rooms is inconsistent across departments. Progress - Complete Computing has been able to use their own departmental funding. No other big requests from other departments. ESE common room now has new furniture.
3. Second Hand Swap Shop	Description: Launch a swap shop that students can easily access and rely on. Progress - In progress Digital & Marketing team to find out feasibility of letting users share their email on the platform
4. Culturally Sensitive Counselling and Mental Health Advice Service	Description: The University's MH Strategy is to provide culturally sensitive counselling. Progress – Complete The counselling team completes regular "refresher" training. They've now also completed training that ICU has been advocating for. ISoc delivered reverse workshops on cultural sensitivity with the Counselling team and it received excellent feedback. The team are looking to adopt reverse workshop models with other student groups.
5. White City Travel	Description: Intercampus travel needs to be improved as the university expands the White City Campus. Progress - Complete Shuttle bus now runs from 07.30 till 18.35. People will be able to get to 9am lectures in White City and come catch the 18.15 bus after lectures to head back to South Kensington.

Additional Reflections and Parting Words for the Board

- Generally, I'm pleased with the completion of most of my manifesto objectives and how students have messaged saying that it was genuinely helpful, especially on food and transport. On top of that, I'm also pleased to have expanded useful touchpoints with more university stakeholders – not just the most senior ones, but also those who are directly involved in executing ideas on the ground.
- I'm excited to see that ICU is moving towards a community organising approach. Issues that come through our Liberation and Community Networks are multi-layered and advocacy often requires stepping outside and/ or breaking down existing structures – something ICU is less

familiar with, historically and culturally. As a Board, we need to shift to a "generative mode" on how we approach liberation, our previous and future attitudes towards it.

- START challenging ourselves (ICU) better:
    - The university is refreshing their EDI Strategy and doing more work in the space. ICU's outputs in the EDI space needs to keep up with them. Simply having people from minority backgrounds does not automatically mean we are doing a good job advocating for marginalised groups.
    - We need structures to support the rights of our student staff. We need to examine the reasons we have heard them say *"it's better if you don't care"*. It would be reputationally damaging if students staff unionise against their union.
- KEEP working on Officer Trustee/ Elected representative accountability. Communicate "wins" but also "work in progress" and make better use of social media – we run the risk that the students will think the Union only does the "fun" things but not representation and advocacy. Be honest and transparent about what you can achieve, what the Union can achieve and what the Union can achieve in collaboration with the University. Rep and Advice staff can be the unsung heroes – do give them credit where it's due and a massive shoutout to both teams. ☺
- STOP listening to us now – have your own opinions. Circumstances could change and we could be wrong.

3. Deputy President (Education) – Emina Hogas

Objective	Description/Progress
1. Personal tutor reframing	Description: Personal tutoring at Imperial lacks parity of experience across different departments. This project aims to clarify the roles and responsibilities of a Personal tutor, as well as standardise role nomenclature at university level. Progress: Stalled due to conflicting priorities across University and teams. Incoming DPE will pick up where left off given the limited time frame until handover. Ensured key stakeholders are briefed and intro meetings set to assist Jacob in continuing this work.
2. PG engagement	Description: Collaborate with Rep Team to embed PG coordinator position in PG student community and establish PG spaces. Progress: •PhD dialogues allows for closer collaboration between Representation and Advice teams to identify trends and better support PGR students. •Faculties have agreed to contribute to rep merchandise for senior roles – PG students have received this extremely well.
3. AI literacy	Description: Generative AI usage should be productive and safe for both students and staff. Raise awareness and encourage usage of existing resources available to both communities. Progress: AI Vision has been developed in collaboration with AI futurists. Recently took part in workshop that identified priorities and timelines for implementing the pillars of the vision. ICU has co-signed the release of the University wide AI vision, with incoming DPE embedded into future work.

4. NSS key areas for improvement	Description: Carry on guiding work on Assessment and Feedback (AF), Mitigating Circumstances (MC) and study space development based on last year's progress. Progress: •MC streamlined platform is looking favourable with switch to Imperial 2.0 in late 26/27. Revised MC policy has been approved at Senate for next AY. •Study spaces – the library study space project has expanded to include both basement and ground floor, as well as floor 2 for the redesign and has been highlighted as a key project for University leadership to prioritise. •2026 NSS positions Student Voice at 4.6 pp above 2025's with 4.7 pp increased on perception of academic representation!

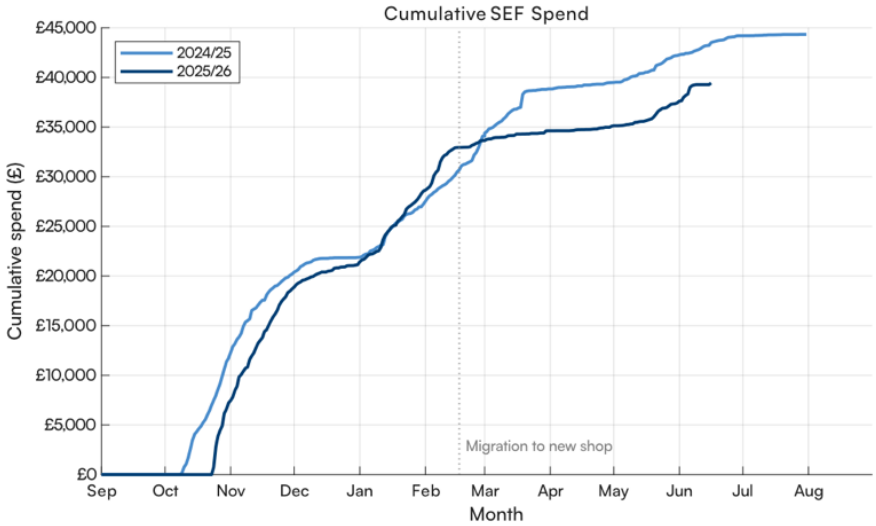
Additional Reflections:

- This year, I am particularly proud of the progress we've made in the Representation space, however as we look to grow this provision there's a clear gap in the permanent staff supporting it. Over the next year, I believe the Rep team would benefit from SLT support to consolidate their offering as we increasingly digitise our services to keep pace with our students.
- I'm also pleased to see OTs included in more senior spaces across the University. From Departmental reviews, Professional services discussions and a new recurring agenda point at Senate, it reassures me to know student input is valued.
- Finally, my heartfelt thanks to Annie and Helena, who have been instrumental in holding down the fort over the past year(s). Deepening student trust in ICU wouldn't have been possible without them.

4. Deputy President (Activities) – Tom Gordon

Final Update on Objectives:

Expand and increase the usage of the Student Experience Fund



As of mid-July, 29.9% (£39,911.22) of the pot has been spent, below last year's 34.3%. Despite a later launch, spending caught up with 2024-25 by January and kept climbing until the platform migration in late Term 2 — a peak period for student activity — during which students were unable to

make many SEF purchases. Momentum began to recover in Term 3.

Funding from Imperial's General Grants Fund Committee (which manages the former IC Trust funds) is confirmed for 2026-27: £20,000 — half the usual IC Trust contribution — supporting a 40% utilisation target. I'd recommend improving utilisation among current users before expanding the fund to a wider base.

Improve training quality for student volunteers
Two extra committee training sessions ran on 17/06 (113 sign-ups) and 20/06 (100 sign-ups) — the latter a Saturday session at Charing Cross, so huge thanks to the Activities Team for giving up their weekend. A Committee Offboarding Conference on 24/06, co-hosted with Imperial's careers service, helped outgoing committee members turn their experiences into CVs and interview answers.

Improve the fundraising and funding provision for clubs and societies
No progress on donation processes or crowdfunding - I'd suggest this as a goal for a future DPA - but a great year for our funding pots:

- Allocated £53,755 under ADF, up from £21,235 in 2024-25.
- Allocated the full 2025-26 trips fund; £25k secured for 2026-27, though my successor may want to consider asking for an uplift.
- Launched the Expanding Reach Fund to break down barriers to joining clubs and societies.

Improve our response times and feedback to students
No 2024-25 reporting exists to compare against, but this is a vast improvement on last year:

- May: tickets (excl. Activity Proposals) received a first response in 16hr on average, fully resolved in 3d17hr.
- May: Activity Proposals approved in an average of 4d9hr (2025-26 peak: 6d6hr).
- Activities Team SLA taken to Activities Forum in January, setting a baseline for response times.
- New room booking form proposed, allowing repeat bookings up to ten weeks.

<u>Additional adventures, reflections, and things I’m proud of:</u>

- The highlight of my year has certainly been chairing Activities Forum, and I'm immensely proud of how engaged our students have been in this space, as well as its three sub-committees. It’s been a delight to chair, and the experience has been a huge personal development for me.
- Following years of saving, as well as a successful Major Harlington bid in Term 3, the SCUBA club have enough funds to replace their ageing diving boat. I hope to see it some day!
- Following years of inactivity, the Culture, Community and Knowledge Management Groups have elected committee members. I’m delighted that their groups will be well represented in Activities Forum and Union Council.
- ADF allocations this year have been the highest since 2022-23. I’m really glad that the uptake has been so high, and that these funds have been used to directly support student groups and their new activities.
- Reflection: our students are an incredible asset to us, and we’re better when we work with them! On a similar note, one of my biggest fears for this year was being the person who says “no” to groups, but I’ve found students are incredibly reasonable when given a rational explanation.