



Senate

Paper Title	Students' Union President's Report
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to note the report from the President of the Students' Union
Points for Senate members to note and further information	<p>The Students' Union President submits a report to every meeting of Senate which highlights some of the projects the Union is currently working on and the key successes since the last meeting. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome Week • Project SEARCH • Sports Strategy • Malta Welcome • Postgraduate Events • Student Leaders' Training • Young Gambler's Education Trust • Zero Tolerance • Autumn Elections • Student Council • TEF/Going For Gold • Peer-Led Learning
Questions for Senate to consider	
Regulatory/statutory reference points	
Strategy and risk	
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	
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Sponsor	

President's Report

October 2018

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President's Report

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It has been a busy few months at the Students' Union. In September, we hosted our largest ever Welcome Fair, and have experienced a large increase in the numbers of students participating in many of our opportunities. There is a general vibe of excitement around campus, as first years come to experience Queen Mary for the first time and returning students come back recharged after a long and hot summer. It is fantastic to see that the student voice is being taken into account more than ever before by the University, which, coupled alongside the new ideas that our Executive Officers are bringing this year, makes it a promising start to a year that will feature new and innovative changes, which hope to improve student lives.

Welcome Week

Welcome Week was generally a success this year, with our programme of events at Mile End seeing an 8% increase in attendance from 9,785 to 10,661, and a 4% over at Whitechapel. Attendance at our programme of alcohol-free events has risen from 957 to 1,145 (including over 400 students attending our Postgraduate Welcome Event), a 16% increase in comparison to last year. Our Welcome Fair saw over 10,000 students attend over the course of two days, with a record number of commercial companies, Students' Union stalls and student group stalls in attendance, with positive feedback from students. However, this event is now so large we are beginning to struggle with significant capacity issues. We were unable to secure additional covered space for the event following lengthy discussions with the University, which pushed the organisation of the Fair to much later than would usually be the case, and this is something we will look to address for future Welcome Fair events.

We have seen a significant uptake in engagement through our social media channels through the trialling of Facebook groups. Our main Students' Union group now has over 3,300 members, the majority of which are first year students, which has contributed to a 7% uplift in usage of our website. Our total page views from Arrivals Weekend to the end of Week 1 rose from 409,264 last year to 437,638 this year. We sent all confirmed new students a physical Welcome Pack to their home addresses following A Level Results Day, which also contributed to our strong pre-arrivals engagement. Memberships of our Sports Clubs, Societies and other student groups rose from 9,339 to 10,191, a 9% increase on last year.

Project SEARCH

We are working in partnership with the Phoenix School, Tower Hamlets Council, and award winning skills and training charity Tower Project to deliver Project SEARCH. Project Search is an education-to-work programme for young people with learning disabilities and Autistic Spectrum Conditions, and provide 8-12 students full time internship opportunities for a year, across the Students' Union, professional services and academic environments with an overall aim for long-term employment. QMUL will be the first University in England to deliver this inspiring programme with social capital. The steering group meets once a month, developing operational plan and training program with a view of commencing the internships as of September 2019.

Sports Strategy

We are putting the final touches in place to a public version of the University and Students' Union's Sports Strategy 2018-2021. Our mission will be: "Together we inspire our University community to engage in sport and activity. Through our facilities and sport provision we enhance the physical and mental well-being of our students, making lifelong changes." We recently delivered a presentation to the Tower Hamlets Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee, outlining ways how our purpose applies to and supports young people's aspirations. The Q&A session focused on a range of subjects, and our Community Sport Social Cohesion Project drew a lot of attention. Our students can be great role models, and we provide training and key skills development to deliver programmes to increase awareness of lifestyle improvements to inspire long-term positive change. There are three strands to the strategy: Healthy Living,

Staying Active and Lifestyle Choices, targeting those more susceptible to gang culture and knife crime. This project currently only has one year of funding through the Westfield Fund.

Malta Welcome

In September, Tom Longbottom, Vice President Barts and The London and Jack Jukes, a BLSA Vice President, travelled to Malta to welcome the new First Year students. It has been very encouraging to see the levels of engagement with the news students, particularly since the second years have returned. Tom will be continuing to work closely with Sophie, the Gozo Society President this year. We are aiming to set up a mentoring scheme in the coming weeks for the second year students in Malta which third year students in London can apply to be a part of, which will ensure that students have support from senior students. As a Students' Union, we have also been looking at how we support the students in Malta both in the short-term and long-term and are currently working on a Service-Level Agreement with the staff in Malta to establish what this support looks like and how it will develop over the coming years.

Postgraduate Events

Welcome events on our Barts and The London campuses went very well in general with great engagement from students. This year, Vice President Barts and The London Tom Longbottom organised a range of events specifically for Postgraduate students within the School of Medicine and Dentistry, including a Postgraduate Welcome Fair at Charterhouse Square, an Inter-Institute Quiz and a Barbeque. The overall feedback and engagement from these events was very positive and we will look to continue similar events throughout the year to find out more about what these students would like from their Students' Union. It is also encouraging to see that, for the first time in a number of years, both of our BL Postgraduate Rep (Taught and Research) positions are contested positions in our Autumn Elections.

Student Leaders' Training

Throughout September, the majority of our student group leaders received their training for their roles. Specifically, this year's Societies training aimed to better engage and embed learning. Feedback found that 88% of Societies had at least one representative trained (385 student leaders) and feedback has been extremely positive. Modular sessions will run throughout Semester 1 for those who were not able to attend these sessions, as well as additional optional sessions including building leadership skills and how to write funding applications for students who want to develop in their roles.

Student Engagement staff also held an Academic Liaison event for University staff who directly support our Societies. This has helped improve University staff awareness of how best to support students groups and the event helped foster a stronger relationship.

Before Welcome Week, we took our Elected Student Councillors to the Bowles Outdoor Education charity in Tunbridge Wells for a variety of training and team building. Some of the training highlights include Consent Training, The HE Landscape Briefing, Skills for Making Change and a simulated Students' Union experience designed to embed the learning over the two days.



Young Gambler's Education Trust

We are in partnership with the Young Gamblers Education Trust (YGAM www.ygam.org/about-us/what-we-do) to launch a Peer Education initiative to safeguard and educate young people. A trained Peer Mentor, recruited from our student body, employed on a part time-basis will deliver a range of gambling and gaming-related harm prevention programmes and awareness campaigns within the university and local community. This is an externally funded post.

Zero Tolerance

We launched our Zero Tolerance campaign on 15th October with an email to all students and a stall in Ground Café where students could complete a survey on their experiences of hate crime to tie in with

Hate Crime Awareness Week. We also launched a new section of our website dedicated to Zero Tolerance, with information on where to report incidents, get support if they have been affected and information on how to join the campaign. The development of the wider Zero Tolerance campaign has been in conjunction with the University and there have been significant steps forward in regards to the development of the Dignity at Work Policy, the Staff-Student Misconduct Policy and the recruitment of a Tackling Sexual Violence, Harassment and Hate Crime Project Manager. The Zero Tolerance campaign will be embedded in all relevant campaigns we run throughout the academic year and we are looking forward to working further with the University to drive change.

Autumn Elections

Our Autumn Elections were successful this year, with candidates elected for all positions with all but one position contested. Our new First Year Representatives, Postgraduate Taught Representatives and Postgraduate Research Representatives were in post in time for the first Student Council Meeting of the year. Additionally, five NUS Delegates have been elected and will attend the NUS Conference in Glasgow in April.

Student Council

The first Student Council meeting of 2018/19 saw motions passed for the Students' Union to lobby and work with the University and local authorities to improve lighting around the Whitechapel Campus around the Garrod Building, the BLSA Building and Floyer House to improve safety. Student Council also voted to lobby the University to ensure Wednesday afternoons are kept free for Postgraduate students in order for them to be able to participate in sport and engage in other extra-curricular activities.

TEF/Going For Gold

We visited all schools individually regarding their TEF metrics with four questions to get an idea of how they envision going forward. There has been a concerted effort from senior management to embed student voice into this project, which was definitely welcomed! All of the Executive Officers have their own streams of work they are contributing towards, from looking at the engagement of students, to building a safe, student-focused learning environment.

Peer-Led Learning

Vice President Education, Redwan Shahid, in September joined a delegation to Florida International University to look at how they undertake Peer Led Team Learning. It was extremely insightful to get a feel of how students can be an integral part of a support structure. The university we visited had a very similar demographic to ours, and very similar problems with attainment and retention. Since the introduction of their programme, they have seen drastic improvements in both areas. The trip was also useful to gather information on general good practice and what works well for particular groups of students.

Ahmed Mahbub

Students' Union President

17th October 2018