



Senate

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| 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus Games • Elections • Going for Gold • HEAR • Appeals Process & Student Support • Work on sexual violence • Sustainability • Community Sport • Awards • Employability • Welcome Back Fair • Exercise Referral programme • Healthy Body, Healthy Mind • Social Cohesion Project • LGBT+ History Month • Course Representatives • Student Partnerships Conference • Zero Tolerance • BLSA Mentoring Scheme • BLSA Works |
| Questions for Senate to consider | |
| Regulatory/statutory reference points | |
| Strategy and risk | |
| Reporting/consideration route for the paper | |
| Authors | Ahmed Mahbub, QMSU President |
| Sponsor | |

President's Senate Report

Queen Mary Students' Union
February 2019

www.qmsu.org



Introduction

It has been a busy few months for the Students' Union. We have launched several campaigns including Sex and Relationships Month, Asian Heritage Month and LGBT+ History Month, launched our all-student survey to gain insight into how we should be undertaking our Going for Gold workstreams, as well as making positive steps forward in our regular programmes of work including sustainability, sport and employability. We have had a promising start to the second semester and we look forward to continuing work that will improve the lives of Queen Mary students.

Campus Games

Campus Games, a Westfield Fund-supported programme designed to engage students, staff and alumni in sport started in September 2018. We have approached the project as a way of engaging groups who are less likely to engage with us. Throughout the academic year so far, we have run two events, the 'Run For Fun' and an 'Indoor Triathlon' which have engaged 13 schools. The Run For Fun helped Park Run break their course record at Mile End, engaging 44 student and 72 staff runners across 13 schools. The Indoor Triathlon engaged 38 participants in total 27 students, 9 staff members across 11 schools.

One of the main barriers to the project so far has been successfully engaging schools regularly to ensure events are promoted to students and staff. It would be fantastic for Head of Schools and all appropriate members of staff to promote the events as a way to prioritise students' and staff wellbeing and as a platform to provide students and staff with a broad range of opportunities to find and develop their own communities on campus.

Elections

Elections season started with the launch of nominations on the 14th of January. New initiatives include making the research and data available for candidates to better inform their manifestos and campaigns on student issues, and drop-in info sessions for interested students with individual Executive Officers and for minority groups. A project group of key staff and the President meet weekly to keep on top of the various actions and ideas.

Going for Gold

At the time of writing, we have received over 1000 responses to our 2019 Big Change survey. The survey focussed on the Going for Gold workstreams, with a particular emphasis on how we can improve campus life. Questions asked about spaces on-campus, facilities, food and drink options, sport investment and how to improve personal safety and security. We will present our results to key stakeholders during March.

We are also directly supporting the University's survey season, covering the NSS and UKES. Students' Union wins featured through the "Tell Us We Listen" campaign, whilst publicity has been placed in Students' Union spaces.

Through VP Barts and The London Tom Longbottom's work on Workstream 4.1, lighting improvements have now taken place on the Whitechapel Campus with new streetlights installed outside the Garrod Building. We have successfully lobbied the Trust for replacement of the lights opposite the Garrod Building on Turner Street and opposite the BLSA Building along Stepney Way. We are also in the progress of identifying other areas of the Whitechapel and Mile End campuses where lighting improvements are required. We are currently working with Emmanuel Nibo and his team to identify the priorities for this project over the coming months, which may include investment in more secure bike locking, improvements to the Garrod Building Reception and Security, installation of more lockers and wayfinding improvements.

My work on Workstream 4.2 has led to a presentation at the Going for Gold operational group with Emmanuel Nibo, to gather feedback and support on teaching room needs from the staff perspective. As this is a long-term piece of work, we are looking to hire student interns to implement the GfG vision after my tenure.

HEAR

We have put forward a proposal for the following Students' Union awards and activities to be included in this year's HEAR: QM Skills Award completers, Education Awards, Societies and Student Media Awards, Volunteering and RAG Awards, and Sports Awards.

Appeals Process & Student Support

The four Executive Officers have been meeting regularly with the ARCS team to work together more on the appeals and extenuating circumstances process at Queen Mary. We have been trying to identify solutions on how to improve this system following numerous issues raised by students regarding delays with the process and methods of communication. We are also working with university staff on areas where we can improve our advice and counselling service for students, including a higher number of BME counsellors, a greater number of counsellors and a wider range of services available on all our campuses.

Work on sexual violence

During January, VP Welfare Ella Harvey held the first Sex and Relationships Month. The month focused on establishing and identifying healthy relationships, sex positivity and addressing sexual violence on campus. A series of events took place, including informative workshops, fun activities and a themed club night, which raised money for Refuge. Events were well attended and positive conversations about sex and relationships developed on campus amongst a number of students. We held an event in Library Square on the 17th January, where students had the opportunity to disclose information about sexual violence on campus. We received 70 responses, and valuable information was collected which can be used to develop the work the Students' Union and University are doing surrounding sexual violence. Recently, the University has committed to funding "Report and Support", a platform for students and staff to disclose any sexual violence related incident that has happened to them. We have also recently recruited a Sexual Harassment Project Manager to ensure that the correct care pathways are in place.

Sustainability

120 students benefitted from the winter Re-Use campaign. We saved around 280kg of household item from landfill, bringing our total savings this academic year to an amazing 1 tonne. Finding storage space before May for the summer campaign is an ongoing challenge. We are working with the Queen Mary Waste Manager and Head of Sustainability to find a solution before May. One option is hiring a container but this comes at quite a large cost and is not a sustainable option.

Once again, to reduce our food waste, between January and April volunteers will be taking unsold packaged food from Mile End Students' Union outlets to Hackney Winter Night Shelter every Friday night.

The first canal-clean up in a couple of years took place on Thursday, 24th January, this time run independently from Thames 21. We have planned another Big Clean-Up for 27th February in Whitechapel.

Community Sport

82 student leaders have volunteered in the local community this year through the Community Sport programme. They have facilitated over 687 hours of sport and 756 young people and members of the local community have benefitted from the programme. Find out more at www.qmsu.org/communitysport/

We have again been selected as a Co-op Local Community Cause. In November 2017, we received over £5,600 raised by Co-op members to support our delivery of inclusive sport sessions with local schoolchildren. That funding is still being used to provide sessions with a focus on target groups such as people with disabilities, women and girls and BAME groups.

Awards

Nominations are now open for all of our awards ceremonies: Societies and Student Media Awards (Thursday, 21st March) and RAG, Volunteering and Sustainability Awards (Tuesday, 26th March). The Education Awards

will be taking place on 25th March and will celebrate the contributions of staff and course representatives who have made a positive difference to the educational experience of students. You can find more information about all our awards at www.qmsu.org/awards/

Employability

292 students have signed up to Skills Award, and we estimate that approx. 100 of them will complete all the requirements for the Award. We have organised 39 training sessions and 10 reflection sessions between October 2018 and March 2019.

Three LinkedIn Photo sessions ran in November, December and February. 64 students has professional photos taken to use on their profiles. The photos are taken by our Student Photographers.

Welcome Back Fair

We held our Welcome Back Fair in January The event was attended by over 1,800 students and featured over 140 stalls from Societies, Club Sport, Volunteering Groups and Student Media.

Exercise Referral programme

The Queen Mary Exercise Referral project is a joint pilot project that is designed and delivered by the Sports Development Team and the Disability and Dyslexia Team. We have designed the programme for students who suffer from mild to moderate levels of anxiety and depression and aims to use exercise and good nutrition as a tool to tackle their symptoms, allowing students to cope better with university and general life and increasing all-round wellbeing and retention at university. We have appointed a student intern to deliver the programme for the 2018/19 academic year and all measuring, reporting and have produced all support documents. Students are engaging with the project well, with over 10 students involved this semester. We have a target of 20 students per semester; something we are hoping will increase with buy in from a more varied source of referring departments across the university.

Healthy Body, Healthy Mind

The Healthy Body Healthy Mind programme provides free, structured, health and wellbeing activities to prevent stress, increase productivity, and offer a balanced lifestyle during the exam semester to all students at Queen Mary. Activities range from wellbeing walks to old school games and activities and will take place every day in Library Square, Drapers Lounge and the Students' Union Hub as part of our annual Study Well campaign. The Sports Development team have been working alongside VP Welfare Ella Harvey to provide free fruit and water each day, and there will be the creation of an interactive art installation. The emphasis will be on the importance of exercise and good nutrition amongst students and their ability to cope with the pressure of university, to improve their ability to succeed, stay at university and will engage them to pledge ways in which they can prevent poor mental health.

Social Cohesion Project

The project launched this academic year as a platform for student groups to use sport as a vehicle to raise the awareness of identified issues in the local community. We have had 8 student groups delivering 7 projects across the 3 themes: Healthy Eating, Inactivity and Lifestyle Choices. So far this academic year, over 80 students have engaged with the project, logging over 400 hours in the local community and reaching over 1100 young people. Find out more here: <https://www.qmsu.org/communitysport/students/opportunities/scp/>

LGBT+ History Month

February marks LGBT+ History Month, which has been organised by LGBT+ student representatives and Ella. The month contains a number of activities, both fun and informative for students to take part in. These include LGBT+ students from different political parties debating issues in a Question Time event, to an event exploring diversity in the LGBT+ community.

Course Representatives

Vice President Education Redwan is working with E-Learning to create an online platform for Course Reps to interact with Faculty Reps and other Course Reps in their school and to increase the presence of Course Reps on our Virtual Learning Environment.

Student Partnerships Conference

We are facilitating the first ever Student Partnership Conference in March 2019. It will be a one-day weekend conference with various bespoke workshops targeted at different representatives. The day aims to develop their confidence, skillset and provide networking opportunities with other reps to support them in the duration of their roles. Ultimately, we aim to ensure that reps understand the value of the skills they have developed whilst undertaking the volunteering position and articulate these into future employment opportunities.

Zero Tolerance

As part of the launch of Zero Tolerance Campaign, we asked students to complete a survey about Hate Crime and their awareness of what it is and how to report it. We received 60 responses, and the recommendations that have been made following this survey will be providing us with the next focus for the campaign, alongside supporting the implementation of Report and Support.

BLSA Mentoring Scheme

Work is continuing on developing our new mentoring scheme, which now consists of several different arms: Mentoring for First Year Medics, Second Year Students in Malta, Clinical Foundation (CCFS) Students, Dental Students and Final Year Students. We are currently working with the student support teams within the School of Medicine and Dentistry to look at how we can make sure this scheme reaches the students who need it most and will be creating a handbook for mentors, which clearly explains the support available within SMD and centrally across Queen Mary.

BLSA Works

Based on feedback from students regarding prayer space at our Whitechapel campus, we have completed work to create an extra Multi-Faith Centre in our BLSA Building. We have reconfigured the basement of the BLSA Building to reduce unused storage space, and create more space for our students. Included in this reconfiguration was our new MFC, a large fitness room and a bigger society storeroom.

Ahmed Mahbub
Students' Union President
21st of February 2019