



Senate

Paper Title	Students' Union President's Senate Report
Outcome requested	To Note
Points for Senate members to note and further information	Democracy Review and Elections Course Reps and Part-Time Officers Study Well Student Experience and Learning Resources Campaigns Students' Union Policies Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Policy & Procedures Education Awards Survey Season MFC Update January Welcome Try Something New Student Media Community Sport Community Volunteering and Sustainability Societies Awards
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President's Senate Report

February 2020

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President's Report

Democracy Review and Elections

The review of the Students' Union democratic structures has been completed, and the Students' Union has now begun to implement the changes agreed in the review.

Changes include the introduction of three new full-time Executive Officer Roles (VP Communities, VP Humanities and Social Sciences and VP Science and Engineering), a faculty-based structure with the introduction of a Science and Engineering Board and a Humanities and Social Sciences Board (in addition to the longstanding BLSA Board) and the introduction of School Representatives. The new positions and boards will enable a more localised decision-making process, allowing for increased student representation in all Schools and Faculties.

Following the Democracy Review, the annual Students' Union Elections are currently ongoing. Elections are being held for all 6 Executive Officer positions the Part-Time Officers and the Student Trustees.

Nominations opened on 20 January, and more than 120 candidates have nominated themselves for the positions. The results will be announced on 27 February at the Results Party, which will be held in Drapers Lounge from 7.30pm.

Course Reps and Part-Time Officers

VP Education Annika Ramos, has written a Student Union Bye-law for course reps in order to address the issue of low engagement with the role, which was previously identified by our faculty representatives and by the students. The bye-law will enable the SU to remove a course rep from the position and allow for either re-election or for another student to be co-opted into the role by their school. This bye-law was voted on and accepted by Student Council and is now awaiting ratification by the Board of Trustees.

We have been running 'Course rep of the month' successfully for three months, with the nominations coming from different faculties and courses, and so far, two Course Reps have been recognised through the scheme. The winners are decided using a scoring matrix by the Executive Officers and are invited to come in and collect their certificate and receive their prize. The winners of course rep of the month will also be automatically entered into the course rep of the year award for the annual Education Awards occurring in March.

Study Well

During the winter exam period, the wellbeing campaign 'Study Well' raised awareness about good study habits. This campaign works with key departments within the university to promote the support available to students. Study well was successful, with activities planned over Mile End and Whitechapel selling out each time. Whilst the plan was originally to have Study Well activities mostly based on the Mile End Campus as this was where exams would be taking place, we received feedback that students at the Whitechapel campus would appreciate activities to also be held on their campus. Where students did not show up to a booking, there was always a surplus of students wanting to do the activity. The most well-received activity was doggy de-stress, where we had to turn away extra students who showed up due to lack of capacity. The programme also included the popular 'doggy de-stress', and freebies handed out to encourage students to look after themselves during this time. We also received interest from students on the medical campus in Gozo, which will now be considered in the summer round of Study Well planning, led by the VP Welfare.

Student Experience and Learning Resources

Having discussed the lack of revision week this academic year at the Student Engagement Working group, it became apparent that there was a need to consider having this in for next year's semester based exams. This, alongside considerations for student maintenance loans, resulted in the change of semester dates for 2021/2022, with the inclusion of a re-named, "study week" instead of revision weeks to deter last-minute cramming.

As flagged by the HSS Faculty Rep, the introduction of semester based exams has led to timing conflicts with Friday prayers. The Student's Union is working to distribute a survey that will estimate the number of students affected so that the university can make changes accordingly.

With increasing student numbers and the introduction of QM Online, Annika has been in contact with the library about extending the SCONUL access scheme to students, which allows students to use libraries in other Universities in the UK. They have agreed to do a scoping exercise next academic year, as capacity considerations will have to be considered. This project will have input from the Mile End First Year Rep, as well as course reps.

Through Annika's involvement with the Virtual Desktop Infrastructure solution project, students will be able to access specialist software from home using their own devices, furthering accessibility and eliminating the need for commuter students to come in. This project was piloted for staff and was extremely successful, thereby highlighting an area for expansion with students.

Annika has been conducting a student consultation on industrial action compensation, as it has been recognised that students have raised concerns about the quality of their education being affected. Results of this research will be made available through the Students' Union, with the resolution also being publicised as soon as possible.

Last EQSB it was decided that Annika will be taking forward the results of the Student Experience Survey 18/19 with the new Vice-Principal of People, Culture and Inclusion. She has met with her to discuss the results and we are in the process of creating an action plan to help take forward the recommendations from the survey. Annika will also be presenting the survey at Senate in March for the wider university to receive and discuss.

Campaigns

At the end of November and beginning of December, alongside KCLSU, we launched a project to raise awareness against domestic violence. The campaign was named 'KNOW'. The concept of this campaign was to be a part of the 16 days of action against domestic violence. This was the first time an inter-university campaign was initiated and successfully executed.

Shamima has also been working on WeMove. It is to be launched post-elections. Many students have volunteered to take part in the campaign. The aim is to launch the first strand, which is WeMoveForUS. This strand covers hate crime, domestic abuse, sexual violence and forced marriages. It is a chance to allow students to discuss these topics and learn from each other.

Elected student representatives have organised the LGBT+ History Month (February) and Asian Heritage Month (March). The months are student-led with contributions from elected representatives, student societies and clubs. The campaigns aim to increase awareness of LGBT+ History and Asian Culture and Heritage through a range of events and online resources. Events for LGBT+ History Month are currently ongoing and we are in the planning stages for Asian Heritage Month. As with our other liberation campaigns, we are offering student groups and reps the chance to bid into a £4,000 fund for small grant funding in order to support events and initiatives taking place during the months.

Students' Union Policies

The Union should lobby for Science and Engineering (S&E) faculties to record tutorial sessions being led by one select PhD student for each module (where possible)

As per a policy passed by student council last academic year, Annika Ramos has been in contact with e-learning who has showed interest in doing a pilot with Science & Engineering to record tutorials and workshops. Further policy and governance work will have to occur in cases where students may not want to be recorded.

QMSU should lobby the university to provide subtitling on Qreview videos

E-learning are currently working with the Head of Disability and Dyslexia Service and the Student's Union to implement this policy by doing a scoping exercise on the products available. Considerations on accuracy, reliability and other technical issues will have to also be made.

QMSU should lobby the University to implement a Housing Guarantor Scheme

Annika has also been inputting into the proposal for a rent guarantor scheme to be made in partnership with Housing hand. This scheme will benefit our students through discounts, and will especially aid in supporting care-leavers and estranged students. This is currently waiting for approval by the director of student and academic services and the university's senior executive team.

Should the university abolish the £50 administration fee for Postgraduate Taught students who want to pay in instalments?

Engagement, Retention and Success team have expressed interest on working on this with the Students' Union. The International part-time officers will also be working to update this motion so that it includes international students.

QMSU should publicly acknowledge its own issues of institutional racism alongside lobbying for the University to do the same

VP Welfare Shamima Akter has started working on the policy that passed regarding institutional racism in the student's union. This is something she is looking into with the CEO and Deputy CEO. The project has been phased out and we will be completing the first phase by the end of semester two. This project will give us a chance to collate a lot of qualitative data and we will then proceed from there.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Policy & Procedures

The Students' Union has continued to work with colleagues from across the University on the implementation of the Report and Support reporting platform. This includes work to identify improvements to current University policy and practice relating to complaints of sexual and gender-based violence, bullying and hate crime, as well as looking at the level of support offered to students throughout the reporting process.

The Students' Union is also continuing to deliver our programme of training sessions as part of the Zero Tolerance campaign, including sessions on consent and being an active bystander. Sessions are intended to equip student leaders with the tools to challenge problematic cultures within their student groups and across campus, and students are encouraged to attend the training as part of their accreditation for the Skills Award and Excellence Award

Education Awards

Nominations are now open for the Education Awards and close on 21st February 2020. Every year the Education Awards celebrate the contributions of staff and students to improving the Queen Mary learning experience. The Education Awards include the Course Rep Awards, awarded to Course Reps who have made a huge difference to students and their courses, and the Teaching Awards, awarded to teaching and support staff that have made an outstanding contribution to the student experience. They also include student council awards. Councillors are invited to submit nominations for themselves or other councillors, as recognition of good work.

Survey Season

We have been working closely with the University communications team to support the marketing campaign for the National Student Survey (NSS) and other surveys running as part of the University survey season. This has included working with our Course Reps to encourage responses, offering incentives through the Students' Union's services and sharing key messages and marketing material.

MFC Update

The Multi-Faith Centre has been causing some issues for the Students' Union for the last few months; particularly on the female side. We are finding that students are often using the room as a social space, which has been causing problems for those students who are trying to pray. We have been working closely with the President of ISOC (Islamic Society) to work on a solution to this problem and create a safe space for all our students. Despite improvements during term one, the issues have arisen again. There may be occurrences where we require support from security to clear the space when it is being used inappropriately. A last resort would be to close this space until a resolution is found, which we are trying to avoid.

January Welcome

Our January Welcome Fair was a success with over 120 stalls from our student-led Clubs & Societies, external organisations and the Students' Union's services. We also helped to welcome our new associate students with Students' Union Welcome Packs and a series of welcome events where we saw a good attendance.

Try Something New

The Try Something New programme has launched for Semester 2. It offers a packed schedule of alcohol-free, one-off, no commitment, turn-up-and-play activities and events for all students. Over 60 of the opportunities are student-led and offered through our Clubs and Societies, supplemented by a series of activities offered by Students' Union departments such as Sport and Events. The programme aims to offer students the opportunity to meet other students, get involved in extra-curricular activity and promote the sense of community on campus.

Student Media

We hosted the Student Radio Association Music Network training day in January. Around 70 students from Universities across the country attended to meet record labels and get advice and support from industry professionals on developing their outlets.

We are also supporting QM Careers to run a Media Summit this month, a chance for students involved in Student Media to link up with professionals to gain practical skills and advice on developing their outlets.

Community Sport

QMSU Community Sport has been nominated and shortlisted for the 'Enhancing the Workforce' award category at the London Sport Awards. The award has been shortlisted based on the quality, depth and impact that our programme has and continues to have on our QMUL student and staff volunteers, alongside pioneering projects, programmes and activities that run across Tower Hamlets. The Awards ceremony is on the 6th March 2020.

Community Volunteering and Sustainability

The Re-Use scheme continues to grow! 123 students donated unwanted items to the Re-Use scheme in December, over triple compared to the previous year. The January Re-Use Fair was extremely popular, with all donations taken within half an hour of the fair opening. With support from the Waste Manager, we have secured a shipping container which can be used for storage for the summer scheme, which has been an ongoing limitation to growing the scheme's impact.

In response to student feedback, we have been offering more environmental volunteering opportunities in the local community including monthly canal clean-up opportunities, bulb planting and gardening opportunities, and we have re-started a weekly opportunity for students to take unsold food from our outlets to Hackney Winter Night Shelter.

We are working on adopting the stretch of the canal alongside campus with the Canal and River Trust, which will be in partnership with the University. The adoption, which has support from Vice Principal Philippa Lloyd and the Centre for Public Engagement, involves us running monthly engagement opportunities in the space, which the Students' Union's Sustainability Coordinator will mainly facilitate.

We are also supporting QM Careers to hold a Sustainability Careers Event in March in response to student interest and our Sustainability Action Plan for the Students' Union is complete and is now available to view on our website.

Societies

As well as running a range of social and recreational activities, balls, and trips abroad, several of our societies have hosted (or will be hosting) educational events and national conferences and this term. Conferences include the National Undergraduate Radiology Conference, Paediatrics Society National Conference, the BLSS 9th National Undergraduate Surgical Conference, and the Annual National Global Health Conference.

A Student Engagement Intern has been working with us since November. The role is funded by liberation fund money from the University. Her role is proving instrumental in building relationships with and supporting and advising less active societies, cultural, and faith societies, as well as collecting valuable feedback, which the Student Engagement team can use to develop how we support student groups.

Awards

The dates for Volunteering, RAG and Sustainability Awards and Societies and Student Media Awards are set as 31 March and 7 April respectively. If you'd like to attend any of the awards events please let us know. We

are able to accept and actively encourage nominations from University staff, particularly for our sustainability awards. You can nominate online or email the relevant Students' Union member of staff.

Talhah Atcha
Students' Union President
20th February 2020