



Council Report

Outcome requested:	To note.
Executive Summary:	<p>The report is an update from March until the end of May on activity within the Students' Union. It includes the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Key UpdatesEducation and Student VoiceWelfare and LiberationStudent Opportunities
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President's Senate Report

June 2022

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President's Report

Key Updates

Strategy Data Collection

The data collection for the Students' Union's new strategic plan has now been completed. In March and April, we invited all students to take part in an online survey, and almost 4000 students took part and told us about their Queen Mary experience. Following pre-liminary analysis of the survey data, we have conducted follow-up interviews with students from different areas, including postgraduates.

When the full analysis has been completed, the findings will be validated in workshops with staff and elected reps.

Education Awards

This year's Education Awards took place in Drapers' Hall on 6 April. After two years of online ceremonies (due to coronavirus), staff and students were excited to return to an in-person event at Drapers' Hall. The event was hosted by Stephanie Marshall (Vice Principal Education), Saynab Sharif (Vice President Humanities and Social Sciences), Adi Sawalha (President) and Bilge Kacmaz (Vice President Science & Engineering).

The awards celebrated the achievements of staff members, Course Reps and Part-Time Officers that have made an outstanding contribution this academic year, and the winners were selected by a panel of student representatives. 18 Awards were given out at the ceremony, including Course Rep of the Year (Maria Zareef Kahloon), Student Councillor of the Year (James Tavner) and Teacher of the Year (Professor Lutao Ning). The full list of nominees and winners is available on [our website](#).

Society Awards

On 24th March we held our annual Societies Awards where we celebrate societies and individual committee members for their hard work over the past year. 33 groups across Mile End and Whitechapel nominated themselves for a trophy award. 76 groups nominated themselves for society awards with a further 44 students being nominated for an individual award. We awarded nine society awards and seven individual awards on the night. This year 11 societies received a silver award and the other 21 societies received gold trophy awards.

Study Well

The Study Well campaign is running throughout the exam season to promote healthy studying habits, and provide opportunities for students to de-stress and take revision breaks. The campaign is running from 11th April to 22nd July, with an emphasis on SMD students from June onwards due to their exam period running later than other faculties. Muneer Hussain (Vice President Welfare) chaired a meeting with different teams across the University, including Student Life and Library Services, to co-ordinate everyone's contributions and identify areas of collaboration. Many events have been organised by the Students' Union, including wellbeing workshops, free tea with the Exec, distributing goodie bags, and engaging on social media through study tips, advice and competitions.

International Students

Radhika Thiagarajan (Vice President Communities) and Bilge are working to understand students' concerns and issues relating to international tuition fees. Radhika is continuing to work on improving loans and bursaries offered to international students in UGT, PGT and PGR. Radhika recently met with other Students' Union officers who are currently working on similar projects at the NUS Liberation Conference. She is currently compiling a survey and presentation of opinions about international tuition fees and the hardships students face in order to discuss ways in which Queen Mary can help international students.

Furthermore, there have been continuing issues with international students who failed their January assessments. Their resits did not happen soon enough, and by the time results for resits had been released, these students could have lost their student permission, which means they would then not have been eligible to apply for the 2-year post-study work visa. Many students have made the commitment to financing their education in London based on the availability of the 2-year post-study work visa. Accordingly, Radhika is raising the issue in the global engagement meeting and with the international advice team to help make sustainable

arrangements so students do not lose their opportunity to access the 2-year post-study work visa. Radhika will also attend ESAT to raise awareness of the issue and to ensure a sustainable solution is found.

Enhanced Programme Reviews

The Faculty Vice Presidents are supporting the new Enhanced Programme Review pilot, which is being run in three schools across each of the Faculties. These are the Centre for Commercial Law Studies, the School of Biological and Behavioral Sciences and Wolfson Institute of Population Health.

As part of the EPR process, the Faculty VPs have been provided with pro forma reports from each of the courses within their respective school/institute, covering detailed commentary on 14 themes including, but not limited to: Assessment; Concerns, Complaint and Appeals; Course Design and Development; Learning and Teaching; and Employability. Using these reports and relevant supporting evidence, the Faculty VPs are attending panel meetings to discuss and further scrutinize how the degree programmes can be enhanced, and leading on the theme of 'Student Engagement' in particular, incorporating student feedback and views from SSLCs and other mechanisms.

Once the panels have been held, the officers will be providing their feedback to improve the EPR process as a whole, and discuss their experience in participating on this new format.

Education & Student Voice

NUS Conferences

The annual NUS Conference and NUS Liberation Conference took place in March, and 8 elected delegates attended the events and represented the interests of Queen Mary students. The delegates took part in debates about topics including student housing, funding and accessibility. The delegates were also able to vote in the NUS elections and take part in workshops and networking with delegates from other students' unions.

QM Academy

Saynab is working with QM Academy on two different work streams: Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment and Feedback. Within the Inclusive Curriculum work stream, work has already started on the principles of the inclusive curriculum framework and expanding the headings within to include examples and case studies. Saynab will be supporting the development of a workshop that will focus on the incorporation of these principles into the work of the faculty. Within the Assessment and Feedback workstream, Saynab has represented students' views on the discussions about assessment design and different feedback styles. Saynab chaired the Task & Finish Group on 'Student Voice and Experience' looking through the case studies that will be incorporated in the Assessment and Feedback toolkit.

Industrial Action Strategic Contingency Group

This group, which meets on a weekly basis, has been established to investigate the effects of the strike on student experience, teaching and assessment, academic progression, and award outcomes. Saynab continues to provide feedback from students that have strong concerns about the impact of strikes on these areas of the student learning experience. Saynab has raised the need for improved communication with students from staff regarding: rescheduling missed teaching, further communications about new strikes days, marking and assessment, as well as how to support students throughout this challenging time.

Following the announcement of Queen Mary specific strikes by QM UCU we have updated our FAQs for students.

VLE Expo

Rob Tucker (Vice President Barts & The London) and Adi attended the recent VLE Expo and supported student input into the event. Based on feedback from students, the main issues when looking at a new VLE are: the look, feel and presentation compared to QMPlus; how VLE tools integrate into calendars to support engagement; and the complexity of tools for students/staff using VLE and assessment tools. The expo event was a great way to meet and explore some of the potential options and the Executive Officers hope to support another event, focusing on student input, with demonstrations of new VLE tools, presenting a clear set of options to students.

Supporting Strategic Priority 111

Bilge is part of the Scaling-up Blended Delivery team, supporting the workstream with its projects related to student engagement in MME. Bilge is helping the team to understand students' needs and how to approach increasing their engagement, encourage transparency, and communicate the aim of the projects to students, to increase student feedback.

Student Educational Experience Improvements

Rob is supporting the incoming head of IHSE's Student Academic and Pastoral Support (SAPS). Together they are working to create a SAPS service that supports students' needs 'post-covid', considering new educational challenges, placement concerns, and intersectional barriers students face in receiving academic and pastoral support. Rob has also worked with the clinical skills department to co-create guidance around camera use and building engagement from students with online teaching, which has been circulated to the Associate Deans, teaching staff from NHS placement providers, and SMD staff. Going forward they will be looking at an adaptation of this for students, to get a better understanding of online teaching engagement and will be seeking input on developing this adaptation.

Welfare & Liberation

Ramadan on Campus

This year, Ramadan took place during the end of semester 2 as well as during the revision period. Students observing the month would be fasting during a time of submitting assignments and preparing for exams. The Students' Union extended the opening hours of the Hub until 11pm to allow students to perform Night Prayers on campus. The prayers were well attended, and students gave good feedback in appreciation for the opportunity. Residences held multiple Iftar events across the different halls and residences. Muneer helped support these events by providing guidance on authenticity and also putting Residential Life in touch with BL ISOC for the events on the SMD campuses. Student Life also held two Open Iftar events in Library Square which were very well attended.

Graduation Hardship Fund

The Students' Union previously had a graduation assistance fund that went towards helping students with graduation costs by financing their cap and gown hire. The fund was originally sourced from the Elmhurst fund and budgeted at £20,000. The fund was estimated to last until summer graduations of 2022 but was depleted as of January 2022. Muneer was able to acquire a further £30,000 for the scheme from the Alumni team to sustain the fund until the summer of 2024. The fund was open for students graduating in April and 32 applications were awarded. The fund is also currently open for students graduating in the summer.

Name Change Policy

Radhika is working with LGBTQ reps to lobby the University to change its system to allow students to change their "known as" name on Teams or Email, without having to produce proof or go through complicated processes. This type of system will be trans student friendly, and Radhika is lobbying for the University to prioritise this matter. Queen Mary has changed its system and the new system should enable students to change the name which displays on various teaching and learning systems without a change to their official name. The system is set to go live soon and Radhika is currently chasing the relevant University team for updates.

Nightline

Radhika is continuing to work on the in-house Nightline project, to promote peer-to-peer counselling service on campus. Radhika is constantly engaging in conversations with Nightline Association who have encouraged and promised to support the establishing of a this service at Queen Mary. Currently, Radhika is in the process of putting together the governance documents and service level agreements for Nightline. She will also put together a proposal for funding and present the findings to the Senior Executive Team.

Student Opportunities

Community Volunteering

Student Volunteering Awards took place on 7th April celebrating individual student volunteers and student volunteering groups. The event was attended by student volunteers and representatives from charity partner organisations.

We sent a group of volunteer marshals to the Vitality 10k event on Monday 2nd May and will send a group to the Breast Cancer Research Moonwalk Event on Saturday 14th May through the Give Volunteering a Go programme.

Community partner outreach continues, supported by the Westfield Fund, and as a result the volunteering offering is growing significantly, with 14 new community organisations starting the registration process with QMSU Volunteering since March.

Performance Sport

It has been a positive two semesters in performance sport after the pandemic. There has been a total of five student athletes on the Talented Athlete programme, three returning and two new athletes. The programme has received great feedback from the students involved, with 100% saying they have enjoyed being part of the programme. We have had four athletes compete in international competitions this year, one of which also won Bronze and BUCS National and Gold at BUCS Southern Championships. Our Sport Department are also currently working with the University to receive an accreditation from the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme for Dual Career (supporting student athletes with study and competition).

Campus Games

The Campus Games programme provides the opportunity for students to get involved in large scale sporting opportunities throughout the year in order to win points for their School or Hall. Previous events have included an indoor triathlon, tug of war and a local park run.

This year Campus Games has begun a new strand working with QM Residence Life to offer a Campus Games programme specifically for students living in halls. We have run 8 events so far this academic year, with 3 more organised for the exam and summer season. We have engaged 133 students across 17 halls, and are looking to focus on supporting our postgraduate students during the summer months with cricket and basketball events.

Social Leagues

488 students have been involved in the Social Leagues programme running weekly since semester 1, across five different sport including basketball, football 7 & 11-a-side, netball and cricket. A total of 40 teams have taken part facilitated by 20 student staff, 11 of which has been upskilled via referee qualifications or first aid course. During the exam semester, we will run the first ever women's football social leagues and successfully gained funding from the Football Association to support this.

QM Skills Award

A total of 295 students registered for the QM Skills Award this year. 20 skill sessions were offered in addition to multiple staff-led Reflection Sessions. So far, 75 students have reached the bronze, silver or gold award level with 25 being submitted for recognition on their HEAR transcript. Reflection resources are being offered throughout May to enable more eligible students to complete the Skills Award. Of the Reflection Session attendees this year, 24% have completed the feedback survey with 100% of respondents agreeing that the session had both improved their employability and helped to demonstrate skills to employers.

Community Foundation

There has been a record 76 training engagements through the Community Foundation so far this year, with students benefitting from funded training and qualifications. Student Leaders have logged over 900 hours of outreach with a participant engagement of over 7,063. In April, BUCS awarded us £750 in recognition of the number of students completing football CPD, and an additional £2,500 to develop our football and futsal offer. Our Community Foundation Intern has secured a grant of over £500 to deliver activities during the Queen Mary Festival of Communities.

Get Active

Get Active is a part of our recreational sport programme offering a timetable of weekly sporting activities that students, staff and alumni can get involved with for just £2.50 per session. We offer a range of sports such as badminton, volleyball, fencing and basketball.

At the start of exam season, the Get Active programme has had a total of 4294 engagements across a number of different activities, with 688 unique participants engaging with our Pay as You Go sessions such as volleyball, badminton and basketball. 677 students have benefitted from our free weekly pop-up which offers activities such as badminton, table tennis and cornhole. The Get Active programme is running its first ever exam season timetable, with 8 different activities a week for them to get involved with including a beginners tennis course lead by a professional coach and a new running group lead by one of our staff members.

Student Group Governance

Our student groups are currently in the process of electing new committees for 2022-23. Mile End Groups have held online elections and are now going through the handover process to ensure the new committees have all the information they need to work on their development plans. Our Whitechapel groups are currently hosting their online elections. Our team are reviewing the summer induction we provide to committee members, which will be delivered in June. There have also been elections for the 2022-23 societies board, with both Mile End and Whitechapel reps being elected, their induction will take place in September.

Alumni Café

Radhika has continued the series of Alumni Café events, with the final event for the academic year set to happen in May for students in the School of Medicine and Dentistry. Following the success of these events, Radhika is also working with the careers team at Queen Mary to look for a sustainable model in which Alumni Cafés can form part of the employability workshops/employability week that is set to become embedded within courses.

Internship Project

Bilge continues to work on the Science & Engineering Internship Project, aiming to create more internship opportunities at Queen Mary and help students to find summer internships in their own areas of interest and career development. Bilge will now be supporting existing work to create micro internships with Careers and Enterprise, which aims to give students the opportunity to work for an employer on a flexible, part-time basis for 40 hours. The webpage promoting the Science & Engineering Internship project will soon be launched. It will include application guidance, as well as information about online and in-person workshops to be held in September.

Graduate Attributes

Radhika is continuing to co-lead on the Student Engagement sub-group of the Graduate Attributes work-stream team at Queen Mary. Following the data collected from focus groups, Radhika is keen to pick up on certain student opinions, such as introducing employability weeks in courses, and introducing modules to help international students navigate the UK labour market. Furthermore, Radhika paired with the Graduate Attributes team and presented the findings at the Advance HE Employability conference in Birmingham. This was an exciting experience where Queen Mary got to share its work and also pick up projects from other universities.

Student fundraising

Alongside regular student group fundraising for various charities, the Students' Union has supported student groups with fundraising activities responding to the conflict in Ukraine. Collectively these groups have so far raised over £2000 for the British Red Cross DEC Ukraine Appeal.

Hub, BLSA and Multi-Faith Centre

During the Easter period, the BLSA building closed for 2 weeks and the Hub reduced opening hours to 9am-5pm. Both buildings have now fully reopened to normal hours and will remain this way until the end of semester 3. We continue to monitor our spaces to ensure that they are being used effectively. We have maintained a high number of room booking and external speaker requests throughout the year. Since September, the team have processed 797 Union bookings and 881 University bookings.

The MFC has maintained high levels of use since reopening fully, and Friday Prayer across both buildings continues to be highly attended.

Adi Sawalha, Students' Union President, 1st June 2022