



## Senate Report

<b>Outcome requested:</b>	To Note
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	The report is an update from February on activity within the Students' Union. It includes the following sections:  Key Updates Student Voice Student Opportunities
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# President's Senate Report

May 2023

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# President's Report

## Key Updates

### Spring Elections 2023

Our Spring Elections have now been concluded, and 73 students have been elected to represent their peers next academic year.

This year's elections saw 151 students submit a nomination (compared to 105 in 2022), and 4060 students voted (compared to 2459 in 2022). To achieve this increase in nominations and voters, the Elections Team in the Students' Union used a variety of promotional approaches, including targeted emails to subsets of the student population and a full on-campus campaign with posters, floor stickers, leaflets, banners and digital screens.

[The new Executive Officers](#) for 2023/24 are: Serena-Amani Al Jabbar (President), Matthew Beach (VP Communities), Tahmid Khan (VP Welfare), Amaan Abbas (VP Barts and The London), Jovani Palnoni (VP Humanities and Social Sciences) and Aisha Qadi (VP Science and Engineering).

The newly elected officers will officially start their term in office on 1 August 2023, with a period of training and handover taking place before then.

### Education Awards

The Education Awards is part of the Students' Union's annual awards programme and celebrates the contributions of students and staff to improving the Queen Mary learning experience. This year, we received 505 nominations across all categories (compared to 180 nominations in the previous year) which were narrowed down to 3 shortlisted nominees and 1 winner per award category by a panel of student representatives.

The ceremony was attended by just under 100 staff and student guests from all faculties, and was co-hosted by Stephanie Marshall, Vice Principal Education, Adi Sawalha, President, Saynab Sharif, Vice President Humanities and Social Sciences, Muneer Hussain, Vice President Science & Engineering and Charlie Sellar, Vice President Barts and The London. The event was hosted at Drapers' Hall and included a speech from Gil Baldwin on the history of Drapers' Company and their work with Queen Mary University of London. The evening was a great success and provided an important opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding contributions made to the student experience this academic year.

### Raise and Give (RAG)

Student charity fundraising has been at an all-time high this year with multiple student groups and sports clubs raising money for their chosen charities. When the earthquake took place in Turkey and Syria earlier this year, multiple student groups and sports clubs fundraised for charities supporting efforts to help those impacted. Groups and clubs raised a total of £9732.47, not including the amount of money raised through JustGiving links. There is an [article on our website](#) detailing the groups who have been fundraising for Turkey and Syria.

## Student Voice

### NSS Workshops

A team of officers and staff members from the Students' Union are taking part in the university's workshops about NSS. The first workshop covered student voice and academic support and gave the Students' Union a valuable insight into the ways schools and the Students' Union can work together to improve student voice. Following the first workshop, we are now working on implementing some changes and new initiatives to address some of the concerns that were raised by university staff members.

## **Wolfson Institute Research Support**

We are supporting a study led by the Wolfson Institute of Population Health relating to student behaviours in their digital lives. The research will explore the impact of gaming and internet dependence on students' wellbeing and academic performance. The majority of the funding for the research was through the YGAM charity, which has enabled a research assistant to support the project. The Students' Union will work closely with the Wolfson Institute and others to deliver the recommendations, and this aligns with our new strategic plan and pillars. It is likely there will be further, and potentially more significant, researching funding opportunities once the government's white paper on 'gambling reform for the digital age' has been completed and subsequent legislation put in place.

## **Decolonisation**

Saynab is leading the Decolonise Project, which took place in March. Saynab worked with students to create a collaborative gallery of creative work on their topics of interest and encouraged them to express their stories and highlight the importance of decolonisation for them. Saynab is creating a website where students will find a variety of resources, including links to accessing library resources, which they can meaningfully engage with and participate in open conversations about race and the legacy of colonialism through culture, creativity, and knowledge. The aim of the project is to bring students together to learn more about different perspectives and shining a light on the diversity of our students, via the gallery, resource hub, book club and film screening.

## **UCU Strikes**

Saynab, alongside the other members of the Exec, has been supporting students during the recent Strike and Industrial Action, by offering drop-in sessions. Further support has included gathering feedback, signposting to information, and answering FAQs on the strike action and support available.

## **Digital and IT Accessibility**

Saynab has been working with IT Services to identify provisions for Q-review recordings and lecture recordings to be uploaded to QMPlus, as well as ensuring subtitling is provided in all instances. They have also been exploring the division of recordings and whether they can be split into shorter clips or if timestamps can be included to help navigate the content.

## **Study Well**

The summer Study Well period has begun. The events so far have had good engagement and received positive feedback from students. We have tried to incorporate events to support students with the Cost of Living so we will be handing out meal kits in the next few weeks. This will run alongside the return of our usual popular events such as the petting zoos and pick, paint and plant.

## **Cost of Living**

We have been spending time analysing the Queen Mary specific data from the Russell Group Cost of Living survey to identify the key themes that should be focused on next to support our students. So far, a summary of the data has been shared with stakeholders at the university while we work on a more detailed set of priorities influenced by the data. The food pantry initiative is ongoing and getting frequent use by students.

# **Student Opportunities**

## **Student Group Awards**

On 21 March we held our annual Student Group Awards where we celebrate societies and individual committee members for their hard work over the past year. 42 groups across Mile End and Whitechapel nominated themselves for a trophy award. 43 groups nominated themselves for student group awards. We awarded 9 society awards and 7 individual awards on the night. This year 7 groups received gold trophy awards, 22 groups received silver trophy awards and 11 groups received a bronze trophy award. The QMSU website has been updated with the winners and those who were highly commended on the evening.

Our Volunteering Awards will be taking place on Thursday 18 May where we will be celebrating our volunteering groups, student volunteers, brokerage service and give volunteering a go opportunities. A

number of our volunteers won awards at Reach Out's award ceremony last month, there is an article on our website highlighting the winners.

## **Club Sport**

Semester 2 has been incredibly busy in Club Sport as club activity comes to an end for the 22/23 academic year. Some of our biggest highlights have been the Sports Awards taking place on 25 March with 140 students attending and 14 awards given on the night to recognise the incredible achievements within sport this year. Feedback so far has been extremely positive, and we are gathering more in-depth feedback in the coming weeks to inform how we shape next year's event.

Merger Cup was our final Club Sport event of the year with 34 fixtures taking place over 7 days. An estimated 1500 students engaged in the events and it was an incredible week which saw BL win the cup after some exciting games. We raised £510 for the campaign's charity this year 'Women in Sport'.

Clubs have completed their BUCS/LUSL leagues for the year with 8 teams winning their league and 6 teams winning a cup title which are amazing achievements. Semester 3 sees planning for 23/24 year in full swing, we are currently entering teams for the BUCS/LUSL leagues next year, running elections/AGMs, recruiting new members for the Club Sport Board, inducting our new Sports Officers and will be sending out Club Sport Development Plans in the next few weeks. We are also currently gathering feedback from club sport members from the year to use as the team develops the programme over summer. Our student Sports Marketing Intern has done some excellent work throughout this semester to promote and enhance our programmes and we have seen noticeable improvements in engagements with our social media as well as our programmes. She will be a key part of reviewing our marketing over semester 3 in order to develop this over summer ahead of the 23/24 academic year.

## **Recreational Sport**

### 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.

Since the beginning of the academic year, Get Active has had 6083 engagements across its range of activities. Our pop-ups that provide free and easily accessible activities such as badminton, table tennis and cornhole on Wednesday afternoons have engaged 1053 students. Over the course of the 2022/23 academic year, Get Active has seen a 29.4% increase in student engagement since the end of semester 2 in the 2021/22 academic year.

### Inter-Halls Games

The Inter-Halls Games programme provides the opportunity for students to get involved in large scale sporting opportunities throughout the year as a way to meet other residents and make friends in an active and social environment. It is funded by the Residential Life Team who work closely with the Sport Department to oversee the events. Since the beginning of the academic year, the programme has run 4 events, with Badminton in February being the most highly attended event since the start of the programme in September 2021. This event engaged 45 students across 14 of Queen Mary's halls of residence. Since this success, the programme has run its first event in conjunction with a Queen Mary sports club, providing an Archery Tag event with the Archery Club. So far this year, the Inter-Halls Games programme has engaged students from 18 Queen Mary halls of residence.

### Social Leagues

Social Leagues is part of our recreational sport offer at Queen Mary Students' Union. We offer friendly intermural competitive sport across 7-a-side Football, 11-a-side Football, Basketball, Cricket, and Netball.

At the end of Semester 2, Social Leagues had engaged 360 students, employed 19 student staff, and had 33 different teams competing across the leagues. Additionally, the programme has achieved its highest engagement of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students across our Football leagues since the reopening of the university post-Covid. Due to the success this year, a Women's Futsal league has been created to run during exam semester to increase the sports we offer for female participation.

## **Community Foundation**

Due to staffing changes in the team Semester 2 has seen limited output for the Community Foundation, however, there has still been positive activity within the programme. Over 73 hours of voluntary sports coaching has taken place through the Community Foundation this semester. Furthermore, the Foundation has awarded 6 students its Gold Award and 2 students its Platinum Award for engagement completed over the course of this academic year!

Looking ahead, we're getting ready for the return of our sports camp taking place in the summer holidays and beginning to think about restructuring the programme for the coming Academic Year.

## **Student Group Elections**

Our student groups are currently in the process of electing new committees for 2023-24. 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. The Student Engagement team are reviewing the summer induction we provide to committee members, this will be delivered in June.

## **Green Week**

We supported the University on the annual Green Week held in February. Our biggest canal clean-up of the year was held during this week along with allotment planting, a sustainability skills award session and multiple other events involving student groups and university teams. We are now planning to start collections for our September reuse fair and we plan on recruiting brand new student sustainability champions to help run the fair and other sustainability events throughout the year.

## **Qmotion Sport & Fitness Centre**

Qmotion has continued to grow this academic year. Semester 2 has seen Qmotion reach a peak of 3011 members, our highest membership base since 2018. We also have a high retention rate evident with just over 2700 members at the end of semester 2, which is the highest it has been at this stage since 2017.

Semester two has seen over 60,000 visits to the facility, with an average of 47% of our members visiting a minimum of four times per month, which research demonstrates is sufficient to receive the physical, social and mental benefits associated with taking part in physical activity.

Our group exercise offering has continued to remain popular amongst our members with 2287 engagements this semester, and our free personalized gym program service has been delivered over 300 times, providing our members with the confidence, knowledge and encouragement to keep more active!

**Adi Sawalha**  
**Students' Union President**  
**11<sup>th</sup> May 2023**