



QMSU President's Report

Outcome requested:	QMUL Council is requested to note the QMSU President's report.
Executive Summary:	The Students' Union President submits a report to every meeting of QMUL Council which highlights some of the projects the Union is currently working on and the key successes since the last meeting. The report also identifies some areas that the Union would like QMUL Council to be aware of, provide advice on or take action on.
QMUL Strategy:	Queen Mary, University of London Strategic Plan 2014–19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SA2.2 - EA1.1
Internal/External regulatory/statutory reference points:	Education Act 1994 and related Code of Practice; QMUL Ordinance C5
Strategic Risks:	2. High quality student experience throughout the student life cycle
Equality Impact Assessment:	There are no equality and diversity impacts that arise from this paper.
Subject to prior and onward consideration by:	N/A
Confidential paper under FOIA/DPA	No
Timing:	The President reports on the activities of QMSU at each meeting of Council.
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Date:	19 October 2016
Senior Management/External Sponsor	N/A

President's Report

QMUL College Council, Wednesday 26th October 2016

I'm proud to be part of a Students' Union that offers such a range of support and activity for students. These are some of the highlights, campaigns and concerns that I want to share with Council at the start of the first semester.

Welcome

Communications

We sent welcome packs to all 4,500 UK students and provided bespoke materials for postgraduate and international students for the first time during their induction activities. Furthermore, we saw a significant increase in engagement with our social media channels from A-Level results day to Welcome Week. Our Union Twitter account saw 113,000 impressions during August, an increase from 51,000 the previous year. Moreover, our weekly 'Your Union' email has been redesigned, improving readership rates by 15%.

Events

We held 42 events over the welcome period with over 14,000 attendances, culminating in the return of the Freshers' Ball. Our student videographer has put together a fantastic [video](#) spanning the events that were run.

There were over 10,000 attendees at the Mile End Welcome Fair. Over 200 student groups showcased their activities, whilst the new outdoor spaces provided a festival-feel that included activities and live demonstrations. However, 34% of student groups were unsatisfied with the venues due to overcrowding.

Student Council

On 11th October, we held our first Student Council of the year. These are some of the motions that passed:

Faith Space

There is still not any adequate space for students who observe Friday prayer. A motion passed which books out the Union's Blomeley Rooms for prayer until we find a suitable alternative. The Blomeley Rooms do not safely accommodate all of those who wish to observe prayer. The motion specifically mandates the Executive Officers to lobby QMUL for use of the Octagon, the only appropriate space that the Union knows of.

BLSA

A motion passed at Student Council which mandates the Union to hold Rites of passage at St Paul's Cathedral again this year. Another motion which passed states that the Whitechapel Fair will only host BL student groups due to a variety of reasons, including lack of space.

External Speakers

A motion passed which mandates the Executive Officers to work with QMUL to reduce the time taken to approve external speakers. The current timeframe is 20 working days, and the motion asks for this to be reduced to 10 working days.

Campaigns

Union on Tour

The Executive Officers are touring the campuses to find out what changes students want to see and increase visibility of the Union. Our first outing to Library Square included 'Pin the idea on the President', which suggested several areas for the Union to work on. Some of the themes included increasing mental health support and services, better organisation of induction and timetables, and increasing poster space for student groups.

We will also be sending a new monthly 'Your Voice' email which includes updates from elected officers and Student Council.

Mental Health & Resilience

On the 10th October, the Union ran several activities for World Mental Health Day. They raised awareness through 'Let's Chalk About It', an initiative which saw Library Square covered in chalk comments about mental health. Our 'Elephant in the Room' campaign returned with student officers dressing as elephants and visiting lectures to talk about mental health. Students on the Whitechapel campus hosted a 'Tea and Talk' event for students to come together and talk about their mental health. Moreover, the RAG team raised £230.70 for Mind, just a fraction of the £3000 that has been raised through RAG so far this year.

At the start of October, we will be launching a resilience campaign, 'Managing Your Mind', as part of our annual 'Study Well' campaign. This has been developed with Advice and Counselling, and will promote what students can do to reduce stress, and the tools they can harness to build self-resilience.

Halloween Campaign

This Halloween we are going to address the gory truths of being a student. Our 'House of Horrors' display will focus on the quality and affordability of housing, while our TEF-Fee apples will raise awareness about the Higher Education Bill. Our intention is not to scare students but to talk openly about what fears they have. This campaign is intended to start a dialogue on several other campaigns which will continue throughout the year.

Other Highlights

By-Elections

We have just filled all of the remaining Student Council positions in our by-elections, with an 11% increase in voter engagement from last year. We have also elected 127 new Course Representatives, with 100 continuing.

Employment Opportunities

As well as recruiting several QMUL graduates to our staff team, 4 of our current students have taken up internships with the Union. We have a Societies intern, a Communications and Marketing intern, and two Sports Participation interns.

Summary

Overall it has been a busy and successful start to the semester, with only a small portion of what we have done and achieved highlighted in this report. Looking forward, our segmentation research with Redbrick will begin in early November, which will help us understand our students and engage with them more effectively.

We have recently received the results from our 'Small Survey Big Change', which has produced 12 recommendations that we will now work on. The change students most wanted to see concerned improvements to the library and an increase in study space.

Renovations and 2017/18 Fees

It is disappointing to hear that the University has budgeted £350,000 for the renovation of the Queen's Building foyer. Whilst we understand the need for a welcoming entrance that showcases QMUL, we feel that this is an excessive cost at a time where essential budgets are not being developed.

Furthermore, I have written to the Principal regarding the intended annual fee increase for all students; I was concerned that this was a possibility after the College Council residential but now fear this is a reality due to the 2017/18 OFFA Access Agreement which states:

'2.3.1 Tuition fees for new entrants for all courses will be £9,250 from September 2017. Subsequently, QMUL will apply annual increases to fees each year in accordance with the inflationary increases allowed by Government regulations.'

I am upset that QMUL intends to put the fees up for not only incoming, but also existing students in 2017/18. At the residential I was excited to hear about some of the long-term developments that have been planned, but I don't feel reassured that much is being done to address current issues affecting student satisfaction. I do not feel that any fee increase is justified until we can ensure that students are getting value for the money that they are currently paying.

Miranda Black, QMSU President 2016/17