



QMSU President's report

Outcome requested:	Council is asked to note the QMSU President's report.
Executive Summary:	<p>The report is an update from then end of January to early March on activity within the Students' Union. It includes the following sections;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Discussion PointsKey UpdatesEducationWelfare & LiberationStudent OpportunitiesStudent Voice
Author:	Shamima Akter, Students' Union President
Date:	May 2021
Senior Management/External Sponsor	

President's University Council Report

May 2021

www.qmsu.org



President's Report

For Discussion

Rent and Accommodation Support

Jack Juckes, Vice President Welfare and Tiana Dinard-Samuel, Vice President Communities, have continued to support the students involved in the rent strike campaign in conversations with the University. The University offered a £1000 refund to students who were not on practical courses and could not return to campus due to the latest government guidance announcement stating that students should not return to campus until after 17th May. We were happy further efforts were made to support students, but we also had a few concerns about the terms and conditions to this offer as it came across as inaccessible and restrictive; for example, students who according to government standards were on practical courses like Drama but were not offered face to face teaching by Queen Mary were still ineligible for the offer. We raised these concerns with the University.

In late March/early April, the Rent Strike campaign voted on a renewed set of demands after the latest government guidance. The newest demands included another 30% reduction for the final term, no penalties for strikers, and the opportunity to be released from their licensing contracts early. They also raised fire safety concerns, some of which were picked up by the press. However, throughout April the campaign has quietened down seemingly due to the approaching exam period and students' focus shifting. We have now been having discussions with the University about whether students who have been part of the strike would still be eligible for the previous offers once they pay their rent since they have still been affected, and confirming there will be no penalties for strikers if they choose to end the strike soon and make their payments.

SMD Study & Exam Spaces

Mat Robathan, Vice President Barts and The London, has been attending the "Teaching rooms for student use" group and expressing the need for a safe and achievable policy from the university on study spaces and use of such spaces by students during Covid. This policy needs to be as applicable as possible to different study space types, whilst also recognising how different departments and campuses run. Special consideration and attention has been given to non-bookable study spaces such as in the Bancroft Building and the Graduate Centre. The idea of Covid Marshalls or staff support to monitor use and keep students safe has been suggested.

In Whitechapel, Mat is now planning to ask for capacity to be expanded further by allowing 24/7 use of the Garrod Building again. An exercise to have multiple occupancy rooms is also ongoing. Mat has also approached the university to ask if work to increase ventilation in the Whitechapel and West-Smithfield libraries could take place in order to increase capacity as currently capacity is less than 18 for each library even though they are meant to cater for over 3000 SMD students. Our renovation plans at Charterhouse Square in The Shield and Shield 2 to increase student space and study space are currently delayed to allow Covid-testing to remain on site until July.

Work with the Malta Rep to develop a policy on spaces available to students and student groups in Malta was also delayed but it is hoped to start again soon. This includes ensuring a booking system, similar to that in London, is available in Malta.

Mat is also trying to ensure that, like for our final year medical students, space is available for medical students in other years who require it when taking online examinations. This is important as some students do not have suitable working environments at home and the medicine exams are proctored so cannot be taken in shared spaces such as libraries. We need to ensure space is available to those who cannot take exams at home so they can take these on campus on exam days.

Security

Mat led on a project to address security and safety concerns on our campuses. He and the other Executive officers have now sent a letter outlining security concerns as well as recommendations on how to address these. It is hoped that we can work with Security and other relevant departments to develop a security action plan to implement these recommendations, address student concerns and develop a security campaign that will help improve the relationship between security and students. We are awaiting a response from the

University, but some of the issues mentioned include delays on security improvements, assaults, theft and muggings on campus, bike safety and crimes targeting marginalised groups.

Education in 21/22

The Exec are keen to work with the University to ensure education plans for next year are the best they can be and take into account the feedback we have received on blended learning from the past year. We are hoping to be more involved in work on “Hyflex” technology and the development of any university policy on education for 2021/22. We also recognised that investment into resources to support better integrated blended learning, with more in-person elements that are Covid-safe, is key.

Key Updates

Students United Against Fees (SUAF)

The Students’ Union took part in the day of action led by [SUAF](#), which is a campaign directed at the government to provide financial compensation to students who have been affected by the impacts of Covid-19. This year has been very difficult for students, regardless of the efforts from individual institutions. The government as a whole needs to take responsibility, without putting the blame and core responsibility on our respective institutions. That is why so many students’ unions, across the four nations, have come together for this campaign and took part in a day of action on the 29th April, with the hope that it could inspire more conversation that can lead to actions.

Asian Heritage Month

The final liberation month of the academic year ended successfully. Shamima Akter, President, and Tiana co-hosted the [Asian Women in Leadership panel event](#) which had 27 people in attendance and received positive feedback. The panel consisted of members from University Council and SET amongst external members; we would therefore like to express our gratitude to the panellists for getting involved and supporting the month. They also filmed and uploaded a [mukbang-style video](#) tasting different Asian snacks while discussing the Asian experiences in the UK and the importance of [Asian Heritage Month](#). The video has over 100 views on YouTube, and had further views on our other social media accounts. Tiana also put together some resources on Anti-East Asian Racism for the BL Merger campaign week, where the theme was anti-racism. Tiana has finished putting together an evaluation report for the month to be used as a reference for next year.

Events

We continue to deliver a wide range of wellbeing focused activity and are also promoting this through the [Study Well programme](#). A sample of our current events programme can be viewed on our events page at www.qmsu.org/events. Our weekly Wellbeing Workshops have different themes for each event, from ways to de-stress and re-centre, to creative art therapy and meditation. We continue to have six weekly workout sessions and from May three of these are being delivered live on campus on the Canalside. We have also been working with Happy Heads and helping to support the planning of monthly mental health panels, all of these events have been well received by students and have enhanced their wellbeing in a positive way. Our QMSU Student Events MS Teams group has also offered a great opportunity for those who couldn’t attend live sessions, to take part and make friends along the way.

In conjunction with the BLSA Board, the Association Dinner was streamed live from The Griff Inn, including an exciting programme of games, quizzes, a raffle and of course the awards themselves. Working with our partner technology platform Native, our events team offered full tech support throughout. This was the first time we had trialled live event streaming for an event of this nature from one of our venues and our positive feedback has ensured it will not be the last.

Doctors Day was delivered live in our new outdoor seating area in Godward Square. With over 150 attendees, there was a fantastic celebratory atmosphere to the event and acted as a great trial for our [May events calendar](#), which includes some 20 events back on our campuses in line with guidelines, and with the assistance of the University.

Also, in partnership with the Arts and Culture department, our events team supported the delivery of [QM Conversation Week](#) which focused on interdisciplinary conversation between artists and academics. There were seventeen events in total and hundreds of students & staff engaged giving excellent feedback. All content was filmed and is available for students to view on YouTube.

Recreational Sport

Social Leagues resumed on May 4th. A total of 10 teams are involved across 2 football leagues. The leagues have also involved 4 student staff referees. The leagues will run until June 3rd.

Get Active has delivered weekly pop ups on a Tuesday and Thursday in Library Square since mid-April. The pop ups have involved activities such as Corn hole, Table Tennis and Badminton. So far, we have engaged 390 students, and over 60 students on average per week. Pop ups are continuing to run throughout the exam semester, and our Wellbeing Walks have now also resumed.

QMSU Sport received funding from BUCS Active 4 and Sport England to deliver online activity for students and staff through the pandemic. The Students' Union's Sport and Events teams have worked together to provide regular online activity for students. The project also collaborated with the Residential Support team and has engaged 70 students.

Inclusive Curricula Workstream

This group is looking at inclusive pedagogy and disciplinary discourse and also encompasses decolonising the curricula as a wider topic. Aphrodite Murray-Liddington, Vice President Science & Engineering and the other members drafted principles for the subgroup which included:

1. **Co-create** with students an accessible and inclusive curriculum
2. **Diversify** the curriculum to enable all students to see themselves reflected
3. **Enable** student engagement and success through inclusive curriculum pedagogy
4. **Develop** students' confidence to participate in disciplinary discourse and community
5. **Promote** inclusive language throughout the curriculum and beyond
6. **Value** student feedback
7. **Empower** all students to thrive in diverse environments
8. **Encourage** all students through inclusive advising and mentoring

Aphrodite discussed the need to have accurate representation throughout modules as opposed to a simply one-sided, Eurocentric account of events. Aphrodite suggested that this could involve an array of case studies incorporated into exams and coursework as well as module organisers and lecturers diversifying their further reading and references. Following on from this discussion in the meeting, members clearly took initiative on this suggestion and altered some of the modules they teach (in S&E and HSS respectively). An example of this was the chair highlighting and amplifying representation across a Chemistry course he teaches refocusing content on overshadowed females in the scientific community. The Nanomedicine module highlighted that the person who made the connection between high cholesterol levels and cardiovascular risk was the first female African American with a PhD in Chemistry - Marie Maynard Daly.

An in-depth presentation on inclusivity surrounding group work was given using lived experience in Engineering. This covered students that may have parenting responsibilities, neurodivergent individuals and carers amongst other examples. Aphrodite suggested including a 'reflection' activity when students are required to work in groups. This would reflect on their own actions within a group and their interactions and thoughts on other members. Aphrodite suggested that this should count towards some of their course grade.

Study Well

[Study Well](#) has been re-energised for the summer assessment period, with a great variety of online initiatives mixed with some Covid-secure in-person activities too. The activities that have run so far have been very successful, and planning is ongoing for the rest of the semester.

Study Well will continue beyond the end of May to continue supporting our postgraduate and SMD students. Jack is working with Cameron Storey, Vice President Humanities & Social Sciences, and Tiana to connect the postgraduate arm of Study Well with their Postgraduate Celebration fortnight in June 2021.

Awards and Recognition

The Student Engagement Team have been amazed by how [student groups](#) have adapted this year, and we are pleased to report that we saw a huge increase in the number and variety of student groups getting recognised for their effects and accomplishments via our Student Groups Awards initiative this year, as well as via external and national awards.

This year we made changes to our reward and recognition offer for student groups (student media outlets, societies, and volunteering groups). Changes made included combining societies, student media and volunteering groups into one '[Student Group Awards](#)' initiative, revising our accreditation scheme criteria, timescales and application process, and revising our award titles. These changes were influenced by student feedback from previous years, considered how student-led activity has changed due to pandemic and the impact of the recruitment freeze.

Adapted from last year's Excellence Award, groups were given the opportunity to submit evidence against set criteria on how they have engaged with their members and run their groups this year. Based on the number of points they scored against the criteria, groups could achieve a Bronze, Silver or Gold trophy. We had a 24% increase in the number of groups winning a trophy this year compared to last year. 22 groups won a gold award (an increase of 31%).

On top of winning a trophy, groups could submit nominations for both 'group' and 'individual' additional awards, with nominations judged by student sub-committees. We had 214 nominations for these awards, 117 more than last academic year. All winners were announced via our [Societies Instagram page](#) via video speeches by student representatives and staff. Winners will also be listed on the [Students' Union website](#) and relevant awards titles will be added to winning students' HEAR transcripts.

We also have 6 student groups and 1 student longlisted for 6 awards the [National Societies and Volunteering Awards](#) (winners announced on 5 May!). And earlier this year 2 student media outlets went up against fierce regional competition and won 2 awards at the [Student Publication Association's](#) awards.

In addition to our Student Group Awards, we are still issuing certificates to volunteers who log 25, 50 or 100 hours via our community volunteering service.

Education

HSS Students

At present, Cameron has been receiving enquiries from students across the faculty, regarding degree outcomes and assessment policy. Cameron has been supporting the School Representatives in having conversations with the senior management team of their Schools, to make sure that the policies relating to final transcripts and grade outcomes are fully understood by all students. These conversations are also feeding into further discussions surrounding the differences that arise with Late Summer Resits, in terms of examination boards and publication of results, as well as the possibility of degree confirmation letters for those students progressing to postgraduate programmes at other institutions at home or abroad.

SMD Covid Mitigations and Final Year Exams

The interpretation of Covid mitigations for Medicine and Dentistry have now been completed and sent to students. They are available [here](#). Only the Physician Associate interpretation remains to be finalised and communicated to students. Thank you to all those who have supported and worked with Mat and the Students' Union.

The final year medics sat their final exams including their Objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) examination in person in the Robin Brook Centre. Students really appreciated the hard work all the staff put in to pull this off. However, as this was the first time such an exam was held in such a scale since Covid, there was some important feedback that the Course Reps collected and have passed onto the Assessment Team. The Assessment Team have been very receptive and are already putting in plans to adapt for future exams and improve the process.

Paris Strategy Group

Cameron has been attending the Paris Strategy Group, to ensure that students he represents as part of his remit who are studying at the University of London Institute in Paris are represented in conversations relating to the continued offering of teaching and operations, as well as the potential new areas of teaching and learning, and the management of activities. Conversations have also centred on how the relationship between the Students' Union and ULIP SU has developed during this academic year – more challenging during the pandemic, but still benefiting from positive interactions such as the offering of course rep training and Covid-19 mitigation measures conversations and clarifications.

Blended Learning

With the announcement that restrictions of the third national lockdown were loosening, Cameron was actively speaking with senior university management and Heads of School about on-campus face-to-face teaching available for HSS students. However, due to the unfortunate news that students on non-practical courses would be unable to return to face-to-face teaching until May 17th at the earliest, conversations have now shifted to ensuring that from the start of next academic year, all students, including HSS students, will be able to take part in on-campus activities as part of their core teaching and learning, as well as other education enrichment activities.

Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLC)

As part of Cameron's on-going priority to improve SSLC's, the SSLC Training Team has met to discuss the feedback gathered from the pilot launch of the SSLC Training, which was launched during the Festival of Education 2021, and implement changes and improvements from staff feedback, ready for full launch in September 2021.

Cameron is also working on providing further support and resources for Course Representatives as part of this priority. The next phase, which is well-underway, involves the creation of a Course Representative Hub on the Students' Union website that would collect all information relevant to the Course Rep roles and responsibilities for each Faculty, as well as key dates, contact information and training materials, amongst other areas of focus for the Hub. It will resemble the current [Committees Hub](#) available for Students' Union student groups. There will also be a section dedicated to staff members with useful information about Course Reps and SSLCs.

Mat is continuing work on restructuring SMD non-clinical course SSLCs in order to better align SSLC structures with the rest of the university. He has developed a first draft proposal which he sent to representatives for comment. We hope to introduce Institute reps and Institute forums within SMD, similar to School Reps for the other Faculties. We also hope to involve and invite more of the professional services, including library services, in non-clinical SSLCs.

Mat is also involved in the SSLC training programme being developed which should be very useful to ensure effective and consistent feedback collection.

QM Academy

Cameron has continued to support the QM Academy in various formats. He was actively involved in the planning and execution of the Festival of Education 2021. He is a member of the Assessment and Feedback Workstream, which feeds into the Inclusive Curriculum Working Group. Aphrodite and Cameron co-chair one of the Task & Finish groups of this workstream called 'Student Voice and Experience'. At present, four meetings have been held, and the group will continue into next academic year, with the new Executive Officers taking over chairing responsibilities of the group. The main milestones reached so far have been the following: a mapping exercise of all QMA resources available to students and staff in terms of feedback and input, feeding into feedback and literacy initiatives, working on producing a module evaluation analysis piece, as well as gathering student feedback relating to assessment and feedback. Furthermore, he is also involved in the Advisor Training Working Group, providing support for developing and integrating 'student voice' into the training modules, and the SEED Group.

School Representatives and School Forums

Cameron coordinates the HSS School Representatives and Postgraduate Research Representatives, supporting these part-time officers in carrying out their duties. He has been working closely with the PGR HSS Representatives on issues relating to communications to PGR students across Queen Mary and developing a report with a set of recommendations for a restructure of the PGR Course Representatives system to include better representation for research students within their programmes. School Representatives are also responsible for hosting and chairing the School Forums, a platform that allows Course Representatives to liaise with their School Representative. Cameron has attended many of the School Forums' this semester, supporting the Representatives with questions from students and providing updates on education related matters; and has himself hosted the School of Law Forum due to the vacancy of School of Law Representative this academic

year. Of note, he has provided support to the SLLF Representative, mentoring on lobbying on issues important to students within the School.

ITS/ School Representatives Forum

Cameron has been working very closely with the IT Relationship Manager for Student Experience in kickstarting a new IT Students' Forum in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, a new initiative that seeks to establish collaboration between the Students' Union, ITS, ELU and students to enable direct input from and for students. An initial meeting took place on Tuesday 20th April with student representatives from across the faculty, including current and incoming School Representatives, and the incoming VP HSS. The forum will continue next academic year, with monthly meetings jointly chaired by ITS and the Students' Union.

Mat has also worked with the IT services team to set up and run an IT forum for the SMD that will happen on a bi-monthly basis. This will start fully in the new academic year and will aim to collect student feedback on IT infrastructures, services and more in order to improve our services.

UK Foundation Programme Office (UKFPO)

The campaign to declare no confidence in the UKFPO continues as more and more medical student representative bodies join our efforts and also declare no confidence in the UKFPO.

We will also be starting to contact organisations about our concerns and ask them to help us hold the UKFPO to account.

Welfare & Liberation

Decolonisation Work

Tiana and the Decolonise Society have registered for the NUS Decolonisers Programme, which offers training for students on how to conduct their own campaign and then offers a small grant for students to carry out their project.

Aphrodite and Tiana attended a conference lead by Project Myopia on Revolutionising Curricula and Pedagogy. It was a gathering of UK based decolonising initiatives and academics exploring different themes and perspectives on decolonising university spaces and was very inspiring and insightful.

Tiana has been in conversations with the Doctoral College about a project to encourage more BAME students to get into PhD research and create a new more supportive pipeline. The Students' Union is supportive of this work and looking forward to collaborating further with the Doctoral College on this.

Financial Assistance Fund

Jack has met with university staff to present and review detailed feedback from students about the Financial Assistance Fund and its processes. Staff from ARCS were very receptive and supportive, and are looking at how to implement changes based on this feedback. Jack will be working collaboratively with them to co-create some FAQs and clearer guidance to make the process easier for students. Jack and the ARCS team are also exploring changing the Queen Mary Bursary payment dates to fall in between Student Finance payments to improve cash flow and budgeting for students.

Mental Health

Jack has continued work with Tower Hamlets Talking Therapies (THTT) on mental health support for students. Following on from the low attendance at live webinars, we now have two adapted pre-recorded webinars available exclusively for Queen Mary students in Tower Hamlets, embedded as part of [Study Well](#). This has been a success, with much better engagement than with the live sessions.

Jack has now implemented the Suicide Awareness Training policy for Students' Union staff, with interest from university staff too.

Gaming and Gambling Harm

Jack has worked with [The Young Gamers and Gamblers Education Trust](#) (YGAM) to provide free training for University and Students' Union staff on Gaming and Gambling Harm in students, which is a much bigger issue than many people realise. There was good uptake by staff across a variety of departments in student-facing and student support roles. Next steps are to hopefully build on this positive partnership with YGAM,

organise further training to enable more staff to support our students, and potentially share this training with relevant student leaders and student groups.

Drugs and Alcohol

Jack has recently attended a conference on Students, Drugs and Alcohol, with a focus on harm reduction policies and initiatives. Jack is taking experience learned from this conference to inform his work in this area. Jack has organised a meeting with ARCS to discuss the Drugs and Alcohol Policy and potential changes to this. Jack has also engaged with staff from [Tower Hamlets RESET](#) about support for students with drugs and alcohol and linking up with a harm reduction campaign.

SMD Welfare Support Access

Mat met with Jack and the Advice and Counselling team for QMUL to discuss how we could bring these services to Whitechapel and Charterhouse Square so they are more accessible to students. It was agreed that continuing to offer online appointments will be beneficial, particularly for those on placement or not based in London. Physical presence was harder to provide but we are now exploring if there are suitable rooms in Whitechapel and Charterhouse Square in which to allow students to take appointments over Zoom. These rooms could then also be staffed at certain days and times each week by a member of the Advice and Counselling team to provide initial consultations and signpost students to the relevant service. Mat is exploring options for such spaces and is meeting with the Student Support service for MBBS and BDS to ensure all services are aligned.

Mat is also working with welfare services to develop a simple graphic that could be added onto webpages and induction packs in order to summarise what welfare services are available to all students in SMD. This will help students understand what each service provides for them and hence who to approach about their particular concern. It is also hoped to better signpost to report and support via this graphic.

Barts and The London Women's Week

Our BL Women's Representative led a week of events and a social media campaign for BL Women's Week consisting of competitions, challenges, and a quiz night. The week culminated in a panel event co-hosted by the Women's Rep and Tiana on being a woman working in healthcare. There were 30 people in attendance, and we received a lot of positive feedback about the event and the panellists.

SMD Raising Concerns

Mat has been working on the new "raising concerns" platform for reporting issues that happen on placement. The platform is near completion and will consist of a webpage on QMPlus that explains information around raising concerns and why it is important to do so. The process of then actually raising a concern will be through Report and Support although there will be the option to speak to a senior member of staff beforehand about their concern if a student wished to do so.

Malta

Mat worked with the Malta Rep to raise concerns about fee instalments in Malta and ensuring these are less of a burden on students. A proposal was presented to the University by staff and seems now resolved to allow students the same instalment plans as London.

Mat also raised concerns over limited financial assistance funds being available for students in Malta, particularly during the lockdown. Because of this, an alternative source of financial assistance is being reviewed and proposed by the School. We hope this will be available soon for students.

Malta unfortunately entered another national lockdown over the Easter break. Fortunately, this happened during the holiday and a period of online learning and did not affect placements. However, it did stop students being able to attend campus to access study facilities. Thankfully, although restrictions remain, students can now attend library and study facilities again and teaching that cannot be done online, such as skills teaching, is able to continue as normal. Reps continue to monitor the situation and liaise with the University to ensure students are well supported.

Estranged, care-experienced, and other independent students

Along with variety of senior University staff, Jack co-hosted the listening event for estranged, care-experienced, and otherwise independent students to hear about their experiences and gather feedback on how the university can better support them. Jack has since met with these staff to review the discussion points and feedback, and create a proposal for SET on improvements to support for these students.

Access and Participation Plan (APP)

The Office for Students (OfS) implemented a new component for evaluating each HEI's performance against their Access and Participation Plan (APP), this being a student submission. Jack has engaged with relevant university stakeholders, consulted with students to gather their thoughts and feedback, and synthesised this to produce the student submission for Queen Mary. Jack has now submitted this to OfS. Jack would also like to note the brilliant work and support from the Head of Student Recruitment and Widening Participation and his team, without which the student submission would have been much more challenging.

Student Opportunities

Employable Me

Cameron has now successfully hosted five events in the Employable Me series. Employable Me is a series of network sessions and workshops focussing on certain social aspects of employability. Through conversation and discussion, these events will help students understand how their unique skills and experiences can impact their employability and future in the workplace.

The fifth event 'Female Empowerment', in conjunction with International Women's Day, celebrated the accomplishments of women in the workplace. The focus was on raising awareness of diversity within leadership, support for professional development, equality of treatment, and workplace culture. Overall, the Employable Me series has engaged with over 300 students, staff and alumni, with approximately 150 people attending the events, that provided a platform for 22 Alumni to share their experiences on topics vital to understanding employability and the transition from university to the workplace.

Since the last event, the series has moved away from live events, and is instead moving in a new direction. The new idea, in continued collaboration with the Alumni Engagement Team, is to use Instagram TV videos (IGTV) to showcase Queen Mary alumni talking about a topic and some content related to wellbeing, mental health, and stress. This will allow QM alumni to share their own experience of these topics either at university themselves or in the workplace to provide a resource for students to watch while studying. At the time of writing, Cameron is working on preparing the pre-recorded videos provided by Alumni, editing content together, with the first video ready for launch in the first week of May to coincide with the start of the examination period. The videos will then be released on a weekly schedule for the duration of the examination period.

HEAR Transcript

Aphrodite had a meeting alongside the Students' Union and University communications teams and others to organise a small campaign to promote the HEAR transcript. Aphrodite will be working on promotion that includes a student-friendly explanation of the HEAR transcript and its relevance across ones' university career. The KPI's of this project would include more students accessing their GradIntel accounts at the beginning of their degree, more engagement with QExtras and access to their grade breakdowns which are released on a yearly basis.

Project: Doctorate

Tiana and Cameron have continued to work on Project: Doctorate. This project is focused on two strands. Firstly, the creation of a Postgraduate Engagement Intern role in the Students' Union. The budget case for the role has been drafted by the two Executive Officers, with the aim of introducing it for 2021-22. The role's main responsibilities include actively seeking to address issues and better engaging the Students' Union with the postgraduate community. Both postgraduate taught and research students are underrepresented across the Students' Union's various activities, including student groups, societies and events. At present, Tiana and Cameron have met with both Andrew Livingstone and Stephanie Marshall to discuss the role and have received their support. They will also be presenting the Postgraduate Engagement Intern role to both ESAT and VPRAG to receive the support from both groups. Karen Kroger has supported the funding of the pilot for 2021/22.

The project is also planning on executing a PG Celebration / Awareness Fortnight in June. This fortnight would include several events, including social events (both online and on-campus), networking events and postgraduate specific workshops hosted by both Executive Officers, and a social media campaign featuring

postgraduate alumni. At present, Cameron and Tiana are actively engaging with identified stakeholders to develop the ideas further and produce the schedule and necessary marketing campaign.

Sustainability

The Students' Union have been working in partnership with the Grounds and Gardens and Residential Life teams to recommence offering in-person sustainability activities on campus for students. So far, activities have included several allotment planting afternoons, a foraging walk for Earth Day, as well as seed and pot giveaways as part of the Study Well Campaign. These events have been popular, with many operating at full capacity.

Mat is working on improving recycling provisions on all campuses and ensuring recycling branding and messaging is consistent and transparent. Work is ongoing to look at what recycling is possible on each campus and what infrastructure (bins etc) is needed to enable this. The first phase will involve ensuring recycling facilities are available in the BLSA building.

Community Foundation

During the Easter holiday period, we distributed free activity packs for young people across 4 primary schools in the borough. We have since received a Community Connections Grant of £500 to produce more packs for young people during the summer holidays.

Club Sport

Our Club Sport Marches On campaign engaged over 60 students and 10 clubs online throughout March with online fitness and well-being challenges whilst lockdown prevented in-person activities from happening. 10 clubs have now returned to weekly training and friendlies after restrictions lifted at the end of March and outdoor sport could return safely. Nominations have been submitted for this year's [Sports Awards](#) which will be hosted online in May. 3 more Club Sport Board meetings have been held this semester discussing online events, returning to play and Club Sport development bids.

Get Active

Our online Couch to 5k course ran for 9 weeks and engaged an average of 40 students and staff each week, with tracked runs on Strava, one to one support with a member of the Sport Development Team if needed and weekly newsletters with useful tips to aid participants throughout the course!

Performance Sport

Connie Hayes one of the QMSU Talented Athletes finished in the top 10 at the BUCS 25 mile TT cycling race in April. Connie competed against other cyclists from universities around the UK, it is great achievement especially after a long period of no races due to the pandemic.

We recently conducted a short workforce development and employability survey with current sport students and alumni. This will be followed up with focus groups in June. In-line with the development of our sport workforce and employability offer, we have secured £4,298 from the Annual Fund to provide first-aid, mental health champion and safeguarding training to students in sport leadership roles.

Spaces and Faith

The BLSA Building and Multi-faith Centre remains open for students during the exam period in a safe and covid-secure way. The Hub has remained closed due to the restrictions. Friday Prayer restarted on both campuses on Friday 23rd April. This will continue through the exam period. We are seeing full capacity at Friday Prayer on our Mile End campus.

Qmotion Sport and Fitness Centre

Qmotion re-opened to student, staff and public members on Monday 12th April, following the easing of government restrictions. We are currently offering several special membership offers to coincide with Study Well, and to encourage people back to the facility. The centre has between 200-300 daily visits, which is down on normal usage by half, but similar to levels over the summer. There is a real positive vibe from the users, mainly students.

Student Voice

Training and Handover for Elected Officers

Following the Students' Union Elections in March, we have now started the handover period for the officers. This year's officers remain in post until the end of July, and we are currently working with the outgoing officers to complete their projects and capture their knowledge.

The training for the incoming part-time officers is organised as online modular training to make the training as accessible as possible. The training started in April and will continue in May and June. The training for the incoming Executive Officers is currently being planned and will start mid-July and continue throughout August.

NUS Conferences

The National Union of Students annual conferences took place in March and April. Three delegates attended the Liberation Conference and seven delegates attended the National Conference. During the conferences, our delegates represented the interests of Queen Mary students at a national level. The delegates participated in policymaking, workshops and networking with delegates from other universities.

Shamima Akter
Students' Union President
13th May 2021

Returning Officer's Report

The Students' Union ran its main election which elects the Executive Officers, Student Trustees, Student Councillors and additional non-representative positions from 1 - 4 March 2021.

Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer

The following were appointed by the Board of Trustees to be the Returning and Deputy Returning Officer:

Returning Officer: Service provided by National Union of Students
Deputy Returning Officer: Brad Coales, Queen Mary, University of London Students' Union

Election Statistics

Members of the Union: 22942*

**Figure from QMUL as at March 2021.*

2020-21

Number of candidates (in total) standing for positions this year: 166
 Total number of students who voted this year: 3,970
 Election turnout as percentage of membership: 17.3%

2019-20

Number of candidates (in total) standing for positions this year: 122
 Total number of students who voted this year: 3,605
 Election turnout as percentage of membership: 16.1%

Complaints

Number of formal complaints submitted to the (Deputy) Returning Officer:	6*
Number of complaints upheld:	0
Number of complaints partially upheld:	0
Number of official warnings issued:	0
Number of candidates disqualified or removed from the election:	0

*None required referral to NUS as Returning Officer

General Comments

The 2021 Queen Mary, University of London Students' Union elections were conducted by the QMSU elections team and Deputy Returning Officer, in accordance with the Articles of Association and Bye-Laws. They were overseen by an impartial third party Returning Officer from NUS. The Deputy Returning Officer has deemed the elections free and fair for voters. Six formal complaints were submitted to the Deputy returning Officer, none of which required referral to the Returning Officer. This means voters were able to vote freely and fairly in this election.

This year saw the elections conducted amidst the Coronavirus restrictions. Due to the lockdown, candidates were supported to campaign online, with the debates, training sessions and support sessions taking place remotely. Despite the unusual circumstances, 166 candidates nominated themselves for the 70 positions which were available, a significant increase on the previous year.

Online campaigning gave rise to some innovative practices which presented some additional challenges, hitherto unforeseen in election regulations. These were managed successfully through clarifications and rulings made by the Deputy Returning Officer, and the election regulations will be reviewed accordingly before the next round of elections.

An interruption to the services of the Students' Union website provider (suffered in common with an number of other Students' Unions) on the final day of voting was compensated for by a proportionate extension of the voting period, agreed by NUS as the Returning Officer.

We received 166 confirmed nominations in total (compared with 122 in 2020) with 32 for the six Executive positions (compared with 21 in 2020). Student Council had 29 positions out of 49 contested compared with 24 out of 48 in 2020. There were eight nominations for the four vacant Student Trustee positions, compared with seven in 2020. These increases in participation would suggest that the additional positions created under the Democracy Review, and included in last year's elections for the first time, have now become more established and students more aware of what they entail.

There were three dead heats for the positions of School Representative, School of Engineering and Materials Science, School Representative, School of Law, and Gozo Society President. However, the candidates for two of the tied positions subsequently agreed to serve jointly, thereby avoiding the need to run further elections for those positions. The election for Gozo Society President was subsequently re-run and produced a winning candidate.

Only seven posts remain unfilled and the Union will run a by-election in September/October for the following positions: Disabled and SLD Rep (BL), School of Geography Rep, Trans Rep, PGR Rep (BL) PGT Rep (BL) PGT Rep (HSS) PGT Rep (S&E). The three PGT positions were deliberately held over until the autumn to maximise the number of eligible candidates.

The results for the Executive Officer positions are:

President - Adi Sawalha
Vice President Barts and The London - Robert Leo Tucker
Vice President Communities - Radhika Thiagarajan
Vice President Humanities and Social Sciences - Saynab Sharif
Vice President Science and Engineering - Bilge Kacmaz
Vice President Welfare - Muneer Hussain

Four new Student Trustees were elected to replace Trustees coming to the end of their terms of office.

The New Student Trustees are:

Mustafa Al-Asady
Abdul-Baasit Al-Basakuta
Jack Juckes
Sarrah Kaviwala

If you wish to find out more about the candidates and those who have been elected, please go to www.qmsu.org/elections and follow the links.

Confirmation of Fair Election

I hereby declare that this election was run in a fair and democratic manner which satisfies the stipulations as laid out within the 1994 Education Act.

Deputy Returning Officer



Position: Deputy Returning Officer
Name: Brad Coales
Date: 10 May 2021