



## **QMSU President's Report**

<b>Outcome requested:</b>	Council is asked to <b>note</b> the QMSU President's report.
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<p>The report is an update from May to the end of June on activity within the Students' Union. It includes the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Key Updates</li><li>Education</li><li>Welfare &amp; Liberation</li><li>Student Opportunities</li><li>Student Voice</li></ul>
<b>Author:</b>	Shamima Akter, Students' Union President
<b>Date:</b>	June 2021
<b>Senior Management/External Sponsor</b>	

# President's University Council Report

June 2021

---

[www.qmsu.org](http://www.qmsu.org)

---



# President's Report

## Key Updates

### Aldwych Group

Shamima Akter, President, alongside a few other Russell Group Student Union Presidents met with MP Matt Western to discuss the implications of the new freedom of speech legislation on Student Unions and students. This meeting was facilitated by the Russell Group and it was an opportunity appreciated greatly by the Presidents. The hope is that the Russell Group Student Unions carry on this relationship with the Russell Group and feed directly into different areas of work in the future. Establishing this network and creating these links is a great achievement for us and one that will hopefully serve its purpose going forward.

### Course Representatives

The preparations for the new academic year have started, and the first Course Rep elections have now taken place. The elections for the MBBS Course Reps took place in late June, and the new representatives are now being trained. The main elections period will be in September and October, where approx. 400 Course Rep roles will be up for election.

A new Course Rep Hub has been created on the Students' Union website to make it easier for Course Reps and university staff to find information about the Course Rep system. In parallel with the Course Rep Hub, the Course Reps have also been rebranded to give the Course Reps a more recognisable visual identity. The new branding will include lanyards and email signatures to make the Course Reps more visible.

### Study Well

Study Well has been successful for the undergraduate assessment period and is continuing over the summer for the benefit of Postgraduate and SMD students. Study Well collaborated with the recent Postgraduate Fortnight with some specific Postgraduate events, such as the Plant Giveaway, and the Tea and Walk. Plans are ongoing to continue these initiatives for the rest of the summer, as well as offering additional initiatives such as free fruit and hot drinks for those still studying.

### Postgraduate Fortnight

Tiana Dinard-Samuel, Vice President Communities, and Cameron Storey, Vice President Humanities and Social Sciences, delivered Postgraduate Fortnight from 7<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> June. There was a mixture of social and academic events, both online and in person. Students engaged positively with the events, particularly the events on campus, with multiple students remarking that they had not had the opportunity to visit the campus all year due to the pandemic and so had never seen it before. For these events we collaborated with the Doctoral College, Library Services and our own events team. The more informal campus cake, plant giveaway and Get Active sessions were a chance for students to meet with us and interact with other postgraduate students that they might not usually.

One of the two key events of the celebration was Employable Me, in conversation with Danial Naqvi, a QM alumnus who gave a presentation on networking which is now also available on the QMSU YouTube Channel. The other event highlight was Diverse(ish): The Postgrad Gap in which we invited two guest speakers to discuss the lack of diversity in postgraduate research.

The campaign was also delivered through social media, with postgraduate alumni profiles that the alumni team helped us put together, as well as Instagram takeovers from PGT and PGR students who shared their experiences. In the coming weeks, Cameron and Tiana will be working on a full evaluation report of the celebration.

### Recreational Sport

Social Leagues ran from May until June across two different leagues which over 150 students and 11 teams participated in.

Get Active has delivered weekly pop ups on a Tuesday and Thursday in Library Square. The pop ups have involved activities such as corn hole, table tennis and badminton. Over 550 students have benefited from the weekly activities. Recently Get Active pop ups were also delivered at the University Open Days, where 85 perspective students joined in the activities. The Sport Development Team will be supporting the next two Open Days on July 3rd & 4th.

Our Sport and Events teams are continuing to work together to provide online activity for students. The project also collaborated with QMUL Residents team and has engaged 80 students. The offer includes online classes such as Yoga and HIIT.

## Education

### Covid Mitigations

Aphrodite Murray-Liddington, Vice President Sciences and Engineering, and the S&E Student Experience and Success Officer created a Covid Mitigation Action Tracker which should capture development or completion across schools. This will be circulated to SEB chairs and SSOs in early July. A recommendation from DEAG is to cover the tracker in the report in the late summer exam period. This will be used for record keeping, preparation for potential appeals and a basis for any evolution of the policies needed next academic year.

### Learner Analytics

Aphrodite worked in the LA workstream to review the three software supplier presentations regarding LA software and assess their usefulness when applied to our current data gathered via QMEngage. The process of reviewing is ongoing and there may be potential to invite more suppliers to better understand what factors we can implement to measure noteworthy data and compile it in a more effective system.

### SSLC Restructure

Mat Robathan, Vice President Barts and The London, is working with representatives, students, and institute staff within the SMD to streamline the SSLC structures within the SMD and make them more consistent. Mat has drafted a paper to bring to EQSB which proposes that for non-clinical courses, SSLCs should be run similarly to other faculties as institute wide SSLCs covering all the courses offered by that institute. Membership to such meetings would include course reps, newly introduced institute reps (similar to school reps for other faculties and being introduced as part of the BLSA restructure mentioned further in the report), course managers and institute senior staff. Professional services, such as the library, would also be invited. Alongside these institute based SSLCs, the proposal also allows for courses to run course based SSLCs if they wish to do so. These would target more course-based issues, have smaller membership and would complement the institute based SSLCs.

### Inclusive Curricula

Aphrodite is involved with an online project that aims to amplify representation within STEM for prospective students and school children looking to attend university. To summarise; a plan for a website listing profiles of scientists (predominantly postgrads/academics/professors) with underrepresented characteristics (surrounding race, religion, disabilities, and physical appearance) would be launched. Viewers would be able to search for these characteristics and learn about the journey each individual took to pursue their science career, with the possibility of contact details being provided. The Centre for Public Engagement gave positive feedback on the project with a few points for development and currently a grant proposal is being worked on. If the grant is issued, we hope to be able to advertise this website to local schools in East London as a means of breaking down the pipeline issue of retaining underrepresented demographics in STEM.

## Welfare & Liberation

### QMUL Bursary

Jack Jukes, Vice President Welfare, has worked collaboratively with the bursaries team and the payment dates for the QMUL Bursary have now successfully been moved for the coming academic year. The two

payment dates have been moved from February and May to November and March, which will then fall between the Student Finance payment dates and improve cash flow and budgeting for students.

### **Drugs and Alcohol**

Jack has met with staff from ARCS and Student and Academic Services to discuss the university's existing Alcohol and Drugs Policy. It was agreed that this required updating and Jack will provide feedback on a revised statement by the Director of Student and Academic Services, and feed into further discussions.

Jack is continuing work on an educational campaign for students on how to reduce risks associated with drugs and alcohol.

### **Sexual and Gender Based Violence**

Jack has been working with our Welfare & Liberation Coordinator to deliver Active Bystander training for the incoming Part Time Officers. These sessions have been very successful with good engagement from the students. Jack has also been working with university staff to help plan a university panel event about Sexual and Gender Based Violence.

### **Monthly Residences Meeting**

Jack and Tiana have also been having regularly monthly meetings with Residential Services in the new monthly group, as a result of experiences from this year. These meetings so far have been very successful and will continue to provide a space to discuss important issues.

### **Welfare provision on other campuses**

Mat is working to introduce more wellbeing services such as advice and counselling on Whitechapel and Charterhouse Square campuses. Mat has put in a request for physical space on each campus for these activities to take place in. The rooms would primarily be used as "Zoom rooms", similar to the ones in Mile End, for students to take online wellbeing appointments in. However, the rooms could also be used on certain days for physical appointments and drop ins.

The Raising Concerns platform, to encourage medical students to report incidents both on and off placement, is nearing completion and launch. Mat has also worked to see how this platform could be duplicated for Dentistry.

### **Humans of Queen Mary**

The Humans of Queen Mary project that Jack has been working with University staff on has successfully launched, with stories from both staff and students. Reception and engagement has been very positive.

## **Student Opportunities**

### **Sustainability**

Collections for the Reuse scheme once again took place over student move out week in June. We worked in collaboration with Residences, Estates and Facilities as well as working directly with staff clearing Queens' Building offices before moving to Department W and had ten student volunteers supporting. A shipping container full of items was collected to donate to new students in September and three shopping trolleys full of food have been taken to Bow Foodbank.

As warmer weather has approached, students and staff have been able to see the results of the Students' Union and Grounds and Gardens collaborations earlier in the year. The plants and bushes of campus have come to life with gooseberries, wild strawberries, and multiple varieties of salad leaves in the new planters across Mile End campus and in the Green Mary allotments.

### **Student Groups**

Training for incoming committee members of societies, student media outlets and volunteering groups started in June. Training consists of a mixture of guidebooks for self-guided learning, bite-sized videos, and live training sessions (which are made available to all committee members to watch back in their own time).

Considering term has finished for most students, we received a good response from student groups interested in taking part in the University Open Days this year. Five student groups are due to showcase their group activities over the four days.

### **Rites of Passage**

The 2020 cohort ceremony on June 28th was hugely successful with around 300 graduates attending overall. The event was run across two back to back sessions, one for medics and one for dentists. Whilst guests were not allowed inside the cathedral for medical students due to capacity limits, a livestream was offered and guests engaged with this extremely well. Plans for our 2021 cohort on July 19th are currently ongoing and we look forward to using the same format.

### **Volunteering**

We have seen increased activity on our online brokerage service recently from both charities looking for volunteers and students registering their interest to take part in volunteering opportunities in the local and wider community. As part of the national Student Volunteering Week, the Students' Union ran a [social media campaign](#), recognising the hard work and achievements of our volunteers this year.

### **Club Sport**

Our sport clubs recently welcomed the new committee members in the Annual 'Big Hello' welcome meeting. In the upcoming months over 60 clubs will be planning their sporting offers for all students for the 2021/22 academic year.

### **S&E Careers Placement Event**

Aphrodite chaired a section of the S&E placement event in June. This section focussed on introducing nine students who had either just returned from their placements (e.g GSK, NHS, Unilever) or were currently on them. The Q&A section of the event was very successful and lots of excellent questions were moderated and answered by the team and the students. Just over 100 students attended this part of the student panel.

### **Spaces and Faith**

The BLSA Building and Multi-faith Centre closed on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> June. However, we are continuing to offer the space out to student groups providing they book in advance. The Hub has remained closed due to the restrictions. The final Friday Prayer also took place on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> June. We are offering an additional two Friday Prayer sessions during the University Open days.

## **Student Voice**

### **Postgraduate Representation**

The Postgraduate Research Co-Representatives for Humanities and Social Sciences have mapped the current representation structures for PGR students in HSS, and the Reps have identified a number of barriers to PGR representation. Currently, the representation structures are not consistent between Schools, which makes it difficult for students to navigate the system. Working in partnership with the Doctoral College and the relevant staff members in Schools, we are now aiming to streamline the system and remove barriers before the beginning of the new academic year.

### **BLSA Restructure**

Mat is continuing to work with student representatives and Students' Union staff to restructure the BLSA board and enable it to represent an even wider student population. The plans include adding new institute reps (similar to school reps for other faculties for the SMD), combining the allied courses and PGT rep to form a non-clinical rep who will represent non-medicine and dentistry courses in the SMD, and better defining the zones that make up BLSA by adding a new Engagement Zone, headed by a new Engagement VP. This restructure will be considered over the summer and implemented following a vote at the first Student Council of the 2021-22 academic year.

**Shamima Akter, Students' Union President, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021**