



Senate Report

Outcome requested:	To Note
Executive Summary:	<p>The report is an update from the end of September to November on activity within the Students' Union. It includes the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Key UpdatesStudent VoiceStudent Opportunities
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Senior Management/External Sponsor	

President's Senate Report

November 2024

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President's Report

Key Updates

Feedback Campaign

We have launched a feedback campaign where the Exec Officers gather feedback from students in relation to some of their projects.

Tahmid Khan, President, has launched a new survey on faith and contemplation spaces open for responses from all Queen Mary students and staff members. The responses to this survey will be combined with the faith space footfall survey data that Tahmid collected last November, and written as a report outlining the needs of different faith groups and recommendations as to how the University and Students' Union can help improve provisions for faith and non-religious contemplation. The survey can be found here:

<https://queenmarysu.typeform.com/faithsurvey>.

Rahma Hegy, Vice President Barts and The London, is collecting feedback from medical students about assessments with a particular focus on the role of mock exams. The survey has been designed to gather feedback that can feed into a planned review of assessments undertaken by the Institute of Health Sciences Education.

Al-Habib Mraish, Vice President Science and Engineering, and Nabihah Ali, Vice President Welfare, are collecting qualitative feedback regarding the Academic Advisor Scheme. The target group is Science & Engineering students, and the aim is to understand what is working well about the Advisor Scheme and identify opportunities for improvements. The feedback will be shared with relevant colleagues in the university, and they are working with the Student Experience Directorate.

Jovani Palnoni, Vice President Humanities and Social Sciences, is running a survey that will inform his project about support for students that undertake part-time work alongside their studies. Due to the cost-of-living crisis, many students are working alongside their studies, and Jovani's survey will help us to understand how students are balancing their work and studies, what support they need and any challenges they face.

In addition to these specific topics, the Exec Officers are also collecting general feedback through a series of informal drop-in sessions known as Exec on Tour. These sessions take place across our campuses, with sessions currently scheduled at Mile End, Whitechapel and Charterhouse Square, and we are hoping to arrange a session at the Institute of Technology later this month.

To ensure that we receive feedback from a wide range of students across the different strands of the feedback campaign, we are promoting the campaign on social media, in newsletters and stand-alone emails. We are also doing promotional activities on campus.

Cost of Living Crisis and Self-funded Students

Rising tuition fees and the ongoing cost of living crisis are intensifying financial pressures across the student body. Medical and Dental students are struggling with increased transportation costs to clinical placements, especially in advanced years when placements are more frequent. Self-funded students across all programs are feeling the strain as they work to cover tuition payments and meet financial deadlines. Rising fees are making university life more challenging for many students, including those involved in sports clubs who are finding it increasingly difficult to afford travel costs for practice and matches.

As tuition fees continue to increase, it is crucial that the Students' Union engage actively with the university to develop effective support strategies, ensuring students can thrive in the coming years despite rising costs. This is especially important for prospective Medical and Dental students, as the high cost of these lengthy programs may deter future applicants and create unsustainable debt for those who pursue them.

University Collaboration on Employability Initiatives

As part of the Skills Award employability programme, we have successfully piloted the first session of a new initiative in partnership with SBBS which will see five returning placement students deliver a session they

have designed based on the skills they have acquired on their placement. This first student-led session on professional networking saw 18 students in attendance and the feedback received was positive. The upcoming sessions are on topics including scientific writing, data visualisation and research beyond academia.

We have also partnered with the Student Experience team to incorporate Inclusive Leadership sessions to the Skills Award programme. These CPD-accredited sessions led by Beyond Equality are designed for student leaders and provide a framework for personal development in leadership and the chance to create an action plan to put into practise their new inclusive leadership skills. The first session saw 16 student leaders attend and there will be another session taking place in November as well as in Semester B.

In total, we have delivered nine Skills Award sessions covering core skills such as time management, communication skills and public speaking. There are now 215 students registered for the Skills Award, and we have recorded 122 individual session attendances at the time of writing.

Societies

Students have purchased 10,032 memberships to our societies, and we had over 50 join this semester through the restart scheme and new society affiliation process, meaning we are just short of 300 student groups, not including sports clubs. These groups have already registered 180 events so all-in-all, it's shaping up to be a highly engaged year for societies, and the team are proud of all they have achieved so far.

Club Sport

Since Welcome Week, club activities have included over 1,000 hours of training, 177 BUCS fixtures, and 93 LUSL fixtures. Clubs have participated in four BUCS events, with more planned as the calendar progresses. Many clubs have also been active in fundraising efforts, especially for Movember. The Club Sport Board recently completed its second meeting, reviewing 33 applications for the Club Sport Development Fund and allocating £11,148.45 to support clubs' development needs, ranging from resource acquisition to project funding and unexpected expenses.

Sustainability

Our Sustainability Officer for Mile End has been working with Hassam Naeem, Vice President for Liberation, International and Postgraduates, to embed sustainability activities into each of the liberation months. This included a recent Tribute to Black Leaders of Environmental Justice, including book bingo, to educate and inspire the university community by highlighting the significant contributions of Black leaders in the environmental justice movement.

Our Barts and The London Sustainability Officer recently ran a workshop discussing issues around the student housing crisis and the broader connection to public health. Architecture students from the University of Sheffield were invited and collaborated with members of Public Health and Preventative Medicine society and key academics within the school of Medicine and Dentistry.

The student voice continues to be active on sustainability matters, with the recent student Sustainability Board having record numbers of students attend, including four of the six Executive Officers. The next board will look ahead to Climate Action Week, happening from 17-21 February, encouraging society and student led events. Planning for this has already begun and we will be collaborating closely with the university to deliver a university-wide week of events, including colleagues from the School of Geography, Careers and Enterprise, Catering, Grounds Team and the School of Law.

Efforts to secure storage for next year's Re-Use Fair are still underway, with promising potential in the Queen's Building. We are continuing to work closely with the university sustainability team, having supported the October Energy Campaign and working to embed sustainability in the curriculum, alongside development of the extra-curricular sustainability module.

Course Reps

In Spring 2024 we ran early Course Rep Elections for incumbent 2024-25 Course Reps, a change implemented following feedback from university staff. We then hosted a condensed Course Rep Election from 10 September until 10 October; followed by the customary by-election. Overall, the continued upward trajectory of nomination and voter engagement continued, with over 260 candidates standing in the first round and 159 standing in the by-election.

Over the course of both the Autumn Course Rep Election and By-Election, over 1186 students cast votes, an increase on 2022-23, but a regression from the spike seen in 2023-24. In all, we now have 453 Course Reps in post, with HSS, FMD and S&E all conducting co-options, with QMSU's approval, to fill vacancies.

130 Course Reps have completed their online training and 108 have attended in person sessions, hosted with the Student Experience Directorate and Faculty colleagues. Online training will continue and a final in person session is to be hosted on Friday 15 November.

The next major milestone in the Course Rep calendar is the Course Rep Conference, due to be held on 8 December.

Student Voice

London Student Partnership

Tahmid, Nabihah, and Al-Habib attended the inaugural meeting hosted by Westminster Students' Union for the London Student Partnership, a new collective of all Students' Unions within London. The meeting was well attended and discussions centred on key topics affecting students within the capital, such as the cost of renting and commuting, food poverty, housing shortages, and the need for more student event and relaxation spaces on campuses. The rise in student tuition fees caused particular concern in the group. It is hoped that this group will continue to grow and that it will receive support from vice-chancellors in universities across the capital.

Education Strategy Away Day Student Panel

Rahma chaired a student panel for the FMD Educational Strategy Away Day, with representatives from Neuroscience, Pharmacology, Medicine, Dentistry, and MSc programmes. Prepared questions sparked insightful discussions on enhancing education and student experience, with feedback covering curriculum, assessments, international student support, welfare, and the NSS. The academics actively engaged, contributing follow-up questions.

Inclusive PPE for Clinical Placements

In line with a policy adopted by the Annual Student Meeting and student BMA, Rahma has secured hundreds of inclusive PPE samples for students to use free of charge before clinical placements. This PPE aligns with NHS England guidelines and accommodates cultural and religious needs, ensuring an equitable learning experience. After the trial, a proposal for the University will be drafted.

Summer Internships Project

Al-Habib has started a Summer Internships project which aims to help provide research internships for students in poverty or from low-income economic backgrounds during the summer. Since the last meeting of this board, he has presented to DEAG and received supportive responses, including suggestions for potential partner companies.

Assessments Review

Al-Habib is working with Anthony Michael to draft guidance and policies that will balance assessment weightings with quantity of assessments, as well as ensuring authenticity. He will be joining the Assessment Sub-Board to continue to refine proposed policies regarding weighting and authenticity.

Module Evaluation Changes

Tahmid is in discussions with senior university colleagues on possible changes to the anonymity of submissions for module evaluation exercises. Tahmid raised concerns that student privacy and trust could be negatively impacted by initial changes proposed by the University. Following this, changes have been postponed, and Tahmid is ensuring that the Students' Union is actively being engaged in any decisions on this matter. The Students' Union is committed to working with the University to find a way forwards that safeguards staff from abuse but also guarantees that students can have the confidence to give feedback and raise concerns in a secure manner.

Campus Spaces

Nabihah's proposal to install individual meeting booths for students across campus was approved. Five pilot locations have been decided across Mile End, Whitechapel and West Smithfield Library spaces.

Jovani, Hassam and Nabihah proposed the installation of bidet showers in specific toilets across campuses. Accurate costing is to take place before installation.

An Equality Impact Assessment was complete for the Woman's Space project Nabihah is working on, there have been difficulties identifying a suitable space to pilot the project.

Lighting Improvement Project

New lights have been installed outside of Pooley House and in the seating area near Novo Cemetery on Mile End Campus as part of Tahmid's lighting improvement project. Further work will begin around the Curve restaurant and Graduate Centre soon.

Black History Month

We have had over 20 events for Black History Month, organised by staff, students and our Black History Month Community Organiser. This is a fantastic increase in events and activities for the month. Some of these events included a Zine making workshop, Black-owned Business Fayre and Film Screening.

Islamic Heritage Month

We have begun our first Islamic Heritage Month, starting with Open Friday Prayer in Library Square with 500 attendees in the square. The name and branding were updated following concerns voiced by students that the old name had negative connotations, and the campaign should be a celebration of history and culture instead. The new branding and name have been shared across our website and have been popular with students taking bookmarks and badges from our reception with our new designs. Our Archery Club will host two exclusive sessions for Isoc members, one for women and one for men, celebrating the cultural significance of archery in Islamic tradition. These sessions are free for Isoc members and support our commitment to inclusive sports programming.

Qmotion

This year, we are introducing a buddy scheme at Qmotion for students who would like extra support while using gym facilities. This initiative provides Qmotion members the chance to volunteer as workout companions, helping foster a supportive community within our gym

For Disability History Month, we are re-launching quiet hours at Qmotion to improve accessibility, a service that has been active year-round but will receive renewed emphasis this month to increase awareness. Qmotion has seen steady growth in memberships and class participation, with an increase of over a thousand members. Attendance remains high, with over 161 classes held and an average attendance rate exceeding 60%. Service uptake, including gym inductions and personalised training programs, has also grown, surpassing projected targets. Feedback on recent equipment upgrades has been positive, with additions like new cable machines and assault bikes offering enhanced workout variety.

November and Men's Mental Health Awareness

In support of Movember, we are collaborating with Advice and Counselling to offer a Men's Only Walk and Talk, providing participants a space to discuss men's mental health issues and connect with fellow students in an open, supportive environment.

This Girl Can Week

From 25 November to 1 December, we are running This Girl Can Week, during which various clubs will open training sessions to women for free, encouraging them to try new sports. The week will also feature social media takeovers to highlight female club members and their stories. A special Women's Takeover at Qmotion on 30 November will offer targeted fitness classes and potentially a self-defence class, with plans for partner-sponsored giveaways to further enhance the experience.

Promoting Volunteering in the Community

Rahma is currently working with FMD to promote healthcare students' involvement in the community, including efforts to combat loneliness, homelessness, and various diseases. The initiative includes encouraging students to volunteer in the different projects ran by Tower Hamlets Council and potentially employing students as Healthcare Assistants, giving them the opportunity to train, practice essential medical skills, and contribute to the community in which we study.

International

Hassam hosted a pre-departure briefing session for new international students in collaboration with 4 of our Part Time Officers. This mainly focused on late arrival international students who miss induction period due to their visa issues.

Student Opportunities

Volunteering

The Volunteering Service has had a busy start to the year, supporting 10 active Volunteering Groups, delivering 2 Give Volunteering A Go activities, and providing a huge variety of Community Volunteering opportunities. 192 charities and community organisations have signed up to our Community Volunteering Service, which means they can post their volunteering opportunities to our website for students to apply to.

Currently we have 122 volunteering opportunities available, across a variety of sectors and locations in London. 8,327 students are active volunteers, who have set up a volunteer profile with us and apply to volunteer at our volunteering opportunities.

Our Mile End Volunteering Officer has organised a donations drive for Samaritan's Purse's Operation Christmas Child, recruiting volunteers to help her with fundraising to cover the cost of shipping the shoeboxes for Samaritan's Purse, and an event where volunteers can gift-wrap donated shoeboxes, and deliver them to our closest collection point. Our Barts Volunteering Officer is in the process of putting together a care package drive, where students can donate items for care packages, help to put them together, and deliver them to local centers that support those experiencing homelessness.

Sports Employability Academy Progress

The Sports Employability Academy has made significant strides this semester, delivering over 90 hours of volunteer activities that connect students with both internal sports programs and local community sports organisations. Through these opportunities, student volunteers gain access to professional development resources, including funded sports-based qualifications and free UK Coaching premium memberships (valued at £36). This initiative provides valuable certification and online training to enhance employability within the sports industry.

We have expanded our volunteering offerings through partnerships with National Governing Bodies (NGBs) such as BUCS and London Sport, offering Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events and collaborative projects with QMSU Sports Clubs. This increased visibility in the local sports community is raising Queen Mary's profile while providing students with a practical platform to apply their skills.

Our Female Leadership program, supported by a successful £2,500 funding application from BUCS and the FA, is now enabling female students to pursue FA coaching qualifications. Additionally, we have worked with the International Marketing Department to promote the broad range of opportunities available within QMSU Sport and partnered with SU Volunteering to advertise roles on their portal, broadening the reach to interested candidates.

In collaboration with Careers & Enterprise, we have launched a placement opportunity with the BUCS Emerging Club Leaders Pilot Programme, specifically selecting Queen Mary for this unique initiative. Currently, three students are gaining practical experience at Uxbridge FC, applying their coursework in Marketing, Accounting, and Business to real-world settings within the sports sector.

Raise and Give (RAG)

Student charity fundraising has gotten off to a busy start this academic year, with Student Groups already raising almost £22,000 so far this year across 28 RAG activities. This includes £18,063.13 raised through 17 fundraising events organised by QM and BL Islamic Society for their annual Charity Week. RAG events have been taken place in spaces across campus, from BL RAG using the Old Library in the Garrod Building for their Halloween Maze, to QM Women's Football raising over almost £2,500 for charity at a bake sale in Library Square on the Mile End campus. We look forward to seeing which events are to come and how much money can be raised this year!

Performance Sport Program Developments

Our Performance Sport Program is off to a strong start, supported by our new part-time Strength & Conditioning (S&C) Coach, who has provided specialised training for Focus Teams and Talented Athletes, receiving positive feedback for quality coaching. The Talented Athlete Program has expanded from 6 to 12 athletes, including national and international-level participants. This year, we are also offering performance-oriented workshops to all club members, aiming to provide inclusive development opportunities across our athletic community.

Exercise Referral Program Restructure

The Exercise Referral Program launched this semester and has reached full capacity with five enrolled participants. Based on previous engagement data, the program has been restructured from 12 to 6 weeks to enhance retention and support. In addition to full Qmotion gym access, participants also receive complimentary access to Get Active Pay & Play sessions, which aim to promote long-term engagement in physical activity. Feedback and engagement are being monitored to ensure the program's continued success and alignment with participant needs.

Tahmid Khan
Students' Union President
14 November 2024