



Senate

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| <b>Paper Title</b>   | <b>Students' Union President's Senate Report</b>  |
| <b>Outcome requested</b>   | Senate to <b>note</b> the report.   |
| <b>Points for Senate members to note and further information</b> | The report is an update from March to May on activity within the Students' Union. It includes the following sections:<br>Key Updates<br>Student Voice<br>Student Opportunities<br>Sport and Physical Activity |
| <b>Questions for Senate to consider</b>                          |   |
| <b>Regulatory/statutory reference points</b>                     |   |
| <b>Strategy and risk</b>   |   |
| <b>Reporting/consideration route for the paper</b>               |   |
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| <b>Sponsor</b>   |   |

# Presidents University Council Report

## Key Updates

### Student Experience Forum

We relaunched the Student Experience Forum, which used to be an annual project before the pandemic. The project consists of two parts; a research project about the current student experience at QMUL, and an event to discuss the findings and identify solutions and ideas.

This academic year, the project focused on engagement, disengagement and belonging. A student researcher conducted qualitative interviews with a varied sample of 15 current students to get an in-depth understanding of the current student experience. The student researcher analysed the findings and presented these at the event. The event was well attended with approximately 20 staff members from various teams in the Students' Union and the University coming together to discuss the findings and identifying solutions, ideas and areas of collaboration. The findings have also been written up as a report, which will be shared with attendees and other interested colleagues.

### Spring Course Rep Elections

For the second year, an election was held for returning students to stand for next year's course rep roles. 87 students self-nominated for 170 open positions, with votes cast in almost every race. These unfilled positions will re-run alongside first year and single-year course rep roles in the autumn. The team has been in conversation with Student Experience and Engagement Managers from the faculties to evaluate the success of the spring course rep elections, and to begin developing improved collaborative communications for the autumn elections.

We are now holding our final round of course rep elections for this academic year, selecting reps for students on medical courses whose term dates do not align with the rest of the academic calendar. These students will likewise begin their term next academic year.

### Education Awards

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, the Education Awards were held in Drapers' Hall. These awards are an opportunity for students to honour the student representatives and staff members who have made an impact on the student experience this academic year. We received a record number of over 400 nominations this year, and the event was well-attended. The entire Executive Officer team presented with Nabihah and Hassam presenting individual awards relevant to their portfolio.

### Tackling Islamophobia

Across the UK, there has been a concerning rise in Islamophobia, with our Executive Officer team also being targeted in recent months. Since then, the Students' Union has been working with the EDI team, with contributions from the Executive Officers, to develop an updated version of Introducing Inclusion training for staff. As part of this, the Exec are co-creating case study scenarios that illustrate how Islamophobia can manifest within higher education settings. We have also been presenting the draft case studies to students to gather their feedback, ensuring that work done in this area is data-led and relevant to Queen Mary.

We have recently appointed independent advisors to support organisation-wide work on Islamophobia, including training, sensitive communications, and the development of a joint definition in collaboration with the University. With their help, we aim to work in partnership with the University towards the formal adoption of an official definition of Islamophobia. The recent adoption of a joint definition by the University of Salford and

Salford Students' Union offers a valuable model for co-creation, which we hope to build upon in our own context.

### Launching the Ethical & Sustainable Investment Forum

On the 30th April 2025, Tahmid Khan, Students' Union President, chaired the inaugural Queen Mary Ethical & Sustainable Investment Forum. The forum was attended by students and staff members from across the Union and University. Over the past few months, we have worked closely with the University to establish this new forum, designed to provide students with a direct and constructive space to share their views on how the University approaches investment.

The feedback from the forum will be used to support consideration of key policies and decisions which will then be appropriately taken through the respective existing governance routes, such as the University's Finance & Investment Committee and the Students' Union's Board of Trustees. The forum was an initiative of Mike Wojcik, Students' Union CEO, and has come about through support from the QMSU-QMUL Gateway Meetings and the Good Campus Relations Steering Group, highlighting the importance and effectiveness of these shared spaces. Tahmid successfully advocated for the forum to be co-chaired by the Students' Union President and a member of the University's Senior Executive Team. Co-chairing arrangements will be in place for the second meeting of the forum on the 4th June this year. We hope that this shared model ensures credibility and fosters the co-ownership between the Union and University that is vital for addressing complex issues like ethical investment.

More information about the forum can be found via the [joint statement](#) which was issued by the Union and University on the matter to all staff and students.

### Study Well

Study Well is a campaign we run twice a year which aims to help students study better, improve their wellbeing and provide helpful study and relaxing tips. Summer Study Well has been a busy campaign. We have had fantastic support from university teams, such as Advice and Counselling running their popular Pomodoro sessions again. We have been hosting events such as the Self-Care fair and an exclusive tour of Stepney Green city farm, where students were able to feed and pet animals as well as have a behind-the-scenes tour. We have also hosted mindfulness sessions, yoga and Pick, Paint and Plant activities. Study Well will conclude in July.

### Renovating the Students' Union Lounge

Tahmid has successfully secured £150,000 from the Infrastructure Steering Group (ISG) to fund feasibility work for Phase 2 of the Students' Union Lounge renovation project (formerly known as Drapers Lounge). This initial funding will support the design phase and the development of a detailed construction cost plan, which will be submitted to the ISG for approval later this year. The Students' Union Lounge has already undergone partial renovations and has hosted events such as the Election Results Night and Liberation Awards, receiving positive feedback from students.

In parallel, the Students' Union is working closely with the University's Estates Team to support broader campus improvements, including consultation on the renovation of Godward Square. The aim is for the fully renovated Students' Union Lounge to become a vibrant, inclusive, alcohol-free space for students—particularly valuable with the upcoming reopening of the ITL Building and Godward Square.

### Best Students' Union Nomination

We're proud to announce that we've been shortlisted for Best Students' Union in the [2025 WhatUni Student Choice Awards](#). The award is based on real student feedback - from surveys, interviews, and on-campus conversation with the top scores in every category earning a spot on the shortlist. Being shortlisted reflects how hard our student leaders, staff and volunteers at QMSU work for students all year round. The passion and drive to listen to students, act on feedback, and create unforgettable campaigns, opportunities and

experiences to change student lives has really shone through, embodying our mission as a student-led organisation. The winners will be selected by an independent panel and will be announced later this month at the awards ceremony in central London.

## Student Voice

### Officer Handover

As the end of the academic year is approaching, we have started the handover process for the elected officers. Due to the Democracy Review, there will be significant changes to the part-time officer roles, and the handover for the outgoing part-time officers has therefore been designed to capture knowledge for the benefit of the incoming officers and enable the outgoing officers to reflect on their experience this year.

The planning of the induction for the new Executive Officers has also started. The new officers start on 16th July, before officially taking office on 1st August. Their induction will cover essential knowledge about the Students' Union, the University and the higher education sector. They will also receive training on key skills and meet colleagues across the University.

### BLSA Board Elections

The Barts and The London Student Association board elections took place from Monday 10th March until Friday 4th April. These elections were a new addition to the Students' Union democratic timetable, ensuring students at Barts and The London and other SMD Institutes had representation and support through the BLSA board and its activities. In previous years, these positions had been elected during the Spring Election cycle alongside other Part-Time Officers, Executive Officers, and Student Trustee positions; however, this academic year, following updates to Students' Union democracy, the Spring Elections contained only Executive Officer positions and student trustees. Therefore, we held an additional election for BLSA board members.

Some key highlights included: a well-attended debate for all BLSA London positions; whilst Malta saw a high number of candidates, and engagement with the elections was positive with 49 total candidates and 911 total voters, casting 8111 votes. Results were announced at a small results party on the 4th April.

### Students Who Work Survey and Employability

We are pleased to share that we successfully reached our initial target of 500 survey respondents. This has been a key piece of work, providing us with extremely valuable insights into the experiences of our students who work – a reality for many, particularly considering the ongoing cost of living crisis. Through the data collected, we were able to gain specific information on how many of our students are working, the number of hours they work, the challenges they face as a result, and importantly, how we can act to better support them. We have presented these findings at the Directors of Education Forum and plan to present at several additional upcoming forums to ensure wider awareness and engagement.

Building on the survey analysis, we identified several emerging themes, and we are now developing a range of communications and resources in response. This includes pieces on topics such as self-funding students, strategies for gaining practical experience during university, and more. As part of this work, we will also be interviewing students who have successfully balanced employment with their studies, as well as those who are self-funding their education, to share their experiences and advice. We are excited about the important work ahead and look forward to delivering initiatives that will make a positive impact on the lives of our students.

On the theme of Employability, Jovani Palnoni, Vice President Humanities and Social Sciences, has worked with the Alumni team to bring together industry professionals, including our alumni, to lead an event that

aimed to demonstrate how students can develop employable skills at Queen Mary, whilst also offering practical insights and networking opportunities.

### **Liberation Awards:**

On 7<sup>th</sup> April we hosted our first ever Liberation Awards. This was a chance to celebrate and support the work of our Reps, Community Organisers, societies and individual students who work incredibly hard on Liberation and wellbeing initiatives. We had a great turnout and presented 12 awards and 15 commendations. Students reported feeling celebrated and supported by the Students' Union, and we were proud to be able to highlight the fantastic work they do.

### **Anti-Apartheid Week**

We hosted our first Anti-Apartheid Week Liberation campaign in April, following a student motion that was passed at last year's Annual Member's Meeting. The week comprised two talks by renowned speakers, a bake sale, book club and information stalls organised by students and Exec.

## **Student Opportunities**

### **Volunteering**

This academic year, students have logged over 3600 volunteering hours through QMSU to date. We currently have 85 volunteering opportunities available on the website.

In April, we hosted the annual Volunteering Awards, celebrating individual student volunteers, volunteer groups and our partner organisations for all their hard work and dedication this academic year. We received 74 nominations across 12 award categories. The ceremony was very successful, with the team receiving lots of positive feedback about the evening.

Recently, the team took around 40 QMSU volunteers to the London Marathon, one of the largest Give Volunteering a Go events. There is an upcoming one-off opportunity to volunteer at Haven House's Sparkle Walk in June.

Both Volunteering Officers have been active in organising on-campus volunteering events, with the BL Officer organising an Eid care package donation drive, and the Mile End Officer arranging events to create care packages for St. Joseph's Hospice.

Lastly, the team are currently running elections for the next volunteering group committees and planning the handover and training process to support groups through the transition to their new committee.

### **Sports Camps**

Preparations are underway for the launch of the QMSU Sports Camps, which will run over the summer for children aged 8–11 from Tower Hamlets. We have been successful in securing funding from Sport England's Movement Fund to support delivery of the project. The camps will offer a fun, safe, and affordable experience built around inclusive sports and games such as football, badminton, rounders, and basketball. Held at Qmotion Sport & Fitness Centre and led by trained student staff, the programme aims to develop confidence, movement skills, and social connection in a structured but playful environment, with strong emphasis on safeguarding, accessibility, and enjoyment.

### **Societies**

In early April we celebrated the achievements of societies with the Student Group Awards. We received 111 nominations across the 16 award categories, as well as 23 applications for our new Honours awards. This was a great way to recognise the hard work and dedication shown by our committee members. The ceremony received great feedback from student groups who said that the Awards were a great way to round off the year.

The societies board met for the final time this year, approving 18 new societies and allocating the remaining Development grant funding to the 22 societies that applied. This has gone towards helping student groups grow by funding equipment and subsidising event costs.

We're currently in the middle of hosting the 2025/2026 Society Committee Elections, with Mile End voting taking place in March and Barts and The London voting in May. 126 societies held elections in March, with the remaining groups having the opportunity to run their elections in May. We're now preparing the handover and summer training to welcome our new committees in August!

### **Employability**

The team delivered the final reflection sessions to over 30 students rounding off this year's skills award cohort, ready to be passed onto the HEAR team to feature the award on their transcript. This brings the number of sessions to a total of 41 for this academic year with 442 students attending. Further supporting students embarking on their employability journey and enhancing their university experience.

### **Student Media**

The student media outlets were celebrated at the student group awards and received well-earned recognition. They took home numerous awards, showcasing and rewarding their hard work throughout the year. Their activities ranging from their 33 weekly radio shows and launch events to physical print media and digital articles. The six awards were well deserved and greatly appreciated by the students.

### **RAG**

So far, this academic year, students have raised over £57,000 for charity by organising over 100 RAG events. These have included charity balls, bake sales, sports competitions and many other events. As most student fundraising efforts are now complete, the RAG team will now be focusing on ensuring all money is paid out to charity, while supporting the student groups who are still planning and delivering fundraisers.

## **Sports & Physical Activity**

### **Sports Employability Academy**

The Academy has made significant strides this period, continuing to deliver over 170 hours of sports-based volunteering, benefiting both the University and the local community. We have been successful in securing external funding, including £2,500 from BUCS to support the development of female football coaches and £1,000 from the Centre for Public Engagement to provide free physical activity sessions. Notably, the Academy achieved 3-star Football accreditation for the first time, reflecting high student engagement and the programme's continued success.

### **Performance Sport**

Performance Sport has had a strong finish to the academic year, with athletes achieving notable success at both national and international competitions. Strength and Conditioning (S&C) sessions continue to receive positive feedback, and our partnership with the University of East London's Sports Therapy Clinic has been expanded, offering discounted sports therapy treatments to athletes. Highlights include the Women's Fencing Team winning the Southern Premier Division, Barts Netball securing the University Hospitals Cup, and two badminton athletes earning invitations to the World University Championships. Discussions are also underway with the International Student Recruitment and Study Abroad teams to further expand participation opportunities.

### **Club Sport**

Club Sport has seen continued success as the BUCS season wraps up, with impressive representation at BUCS Nationals. The "Move More for March" Merger Cup charity campaign raised £680 for Mind, showing a 60% increase from the previous two years. Committee elections for 2025/26 are underway, with more than 95% of clubs completing the Returning Officer registration. Over 50% of clubs have already set up or

completed their elections, ensuring a smooth transition to new committees by June. The introduction of an online voting system has improved accessibility and participation in key leadership roles.

### **Qmotion**

Qmotion has had a successful start to the semester, particularly through its collaboration with Queen Mary Residential Services. The reintroduction of the exclusive Res Life membership has proven highly popular, with 151 memberships sold in January alone, nearly surpassing last year's total. In response to student feedback, new group exercise classes, including Hoop Motion, Step, and Ballet Fitness, have been added to the timetable, contributing to a more diverse and engaging fitness offering for students.

**Tahmid Kahn**  
**QMSU President**  
**8<sup>th</sup> May 2025**