



QUEEN'S STUDENTS' UNION

# EDUCATION OFFICER REPORT

## Jason Bunting



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### Outline

A chairde,

November and December were two extremely busy months for the SU and for the University and we worked well together over this period to advance our priorities.

### Key Priorities during this period:

- Academic Rep Review and Academic Representation
- Academic Year Calendar Redesign
- Lecture recording
- Feedback team
- Enhancement of student partnership project
- Strikes
- Supporting the rights of Gaeilgeoiri through the curriculum

### Academic Rep Review and Academic Representation

In November and December, we finalised the consultation for the Academic Rep Review, speaking with all relevant partners to gather feedback on the current functioning of the representation system.

This included our new Course Rep Forums, a new opportunity for Course Reps to come together, discuss challenges and find common solutions. We held three Course Rep Forums in November, one per Faculty and they were met with great enthusiasm.

I also held 1-1 sessions with individual School Reps for a catch up regarding the structure of their academic representation in their Schools and any issues which a new policy could help to address, particularly with regards to addressing gaps in representation in multi-subject Schools.

DASA and I also worked together to organise a workshop including DEs and School Managers to discuss academic representation. I also organised a meeting of SSCC Liaisons to discuss the rep system. The issue of student voice and representation was also discussed at Academic Board for further consultation.

In December, we passed three significant amendments to the constitution, including the introduction of a School Rep Committee, changing Faculty 'officers' to 'Faculty Reps' and changing the timings of the elections to second semester. We also worked with the PG Officer to change the constitution to afford the newly created PG School Reps a seat on Council.

In all, we now have plenty of feedback on which to develop a new policy. These consultation exercises were undertaken with a view to forming a policy before January which guarantees students a seat at the table and ensures our rep system is one of best practice across the sector.

We also finished Course Rep training in these two months for students who were co-opted as Course Reps and began a weekly email called 'Course Rep Roundup'.

I continue to support our team of hundreds of Course Reps in advancing their priorities within the institution.

### **Academic Year Calendar Redesign**

Connor and I presented to UEB on the academic pressures which emerged as a major theme from OMNI. These academic pressures stem in part from the current structure of the academic year calendar.

In these two months, I have also worked closely with the PVC Education and Students as well as the Director of DASA to explore possible solutions to the issues which the implementation of the academic year restructure caused. I raised the issues surrounding the academic year calendar on relevant forums including the AHSS Student Staff Partnership Group, the Development Weeks Working Group and others.

In November and December, we secured agreement from the University to redesign our academic year calendar to address the issues which emerged from the OMNI. This was a major step forward.

This may include moving to a thirteen-week semester where two weeks are dedicated to assessments. This would ensure students are given appropriate time for their assessments, are not expected to learn content while completing assessments and could address bunching as there would be a two-week period for assessments to take place within. There would also be a separate week dedicated to formative assessment so students have a chance to receive feedback before completing assessments of more heavy weighting.

It is also important we address the timings of Development Weeks and I look forward to consulting with students about these potential changes in the new year.

There is also a wider piece of work to be undertaken surrounding assessments as well as feedback as the current practice at Queen's does not effectively equip students with the necessary skills. It is also important that our assessment (and wider education system) delivers local and global impact so there is an interesting piece of work to be done around these items.

### **Lecture Recording**

I am very pleased to report that the University has agreed to develop a policy position paper on lecture recording and I have worked with the Centre for Educational Development over November-December to gather feedback from other Students' Unions around the UK and Ireland on current policy on lecture recording. I have also ensured any future policy will protect the rights of lecturers to engage in industrial action. In late January, a meeting of DLSSG will consider this paper and decide on a future position with regards to lecture recording.

Lecture recording is a useful tool which can aid engagement and make education more inclusive. The Students' Union has policy on the introduction of lecture recording and as such I strongly support the progress the University is making on lecture recording. I intend to consult students more widely in January and support the paper as it comes to DLSSG.

### **Feedback Team**

During these two months we inducted our three feedback interns and they have got straight to work in Faculties planning strategies for the coming months.

These three interns have each had initial meetings with their Schools and conducted student engagement exercises in the library to gather a preliminary idea of what students expect from their feedback.

They have also conducted desk-based research which has evidenced that we both need to examine current policies but also examine why these policies are not always put into practice.

They have each identified a Faculty Project for their focus.

The interns are currently working on creating a programme of events for the second semester which allows students and staff to co-create feedback policies.

### **Enhancement of Student Partnership Project**

Seven School-specific projects were received in November and work continues to support these, as well as the funding of the Enhancing Assessment through Partnership Project.

Next semester, we will also undertake a wider review of the institutional projects including developing a stronger governance model for the wider Student Partnership Project. It is vital for true partnership that students are equal members of this project and as such we will ensure that any future model of governance puts the SU as an equal member. I would be happy to give further details on any aspect of the Partnership project, including an update on current progress on institutional projects if required.

### **Strikes**

As you will all know, two weeks of strike action took place during this period as well. I was proud that our Students' Union stood with our staff in solidarity and recognised the importance of our shared action to address a shared struggle.

As I said during the strikes, students have every right to be angry about this period but it is important that we direct our anger at the right place and work together to fix this broken educational system that attempts to pit students and staff against each other. These strikes were a symptom of our marketised system which treats education as a commodity and it is vital that we continue to support the workers of our University.

### **Supporting the rights of Gaeilgeoirí though the curriculum:**

An Oifigeach Gaeilge, the Campaigns Officer from An Cumann Gaelach and myself met with Mícheál Ó'Mainnín from the Irish department to discuss ongoing priorities and identified next steps.

We are hopeful that we can work in close partnership over the coming months to address the challenges faced by Gaeilgeoirí in the University.

### **Other events attended:**

- Beyond the Binaries, An Cumann Gaelach rally, NUS-USI manifesto launch
- 'Irish in the public space' and 'The mental health costs of marketization' during strike period
- Co-hosted Asylum seeker scholarship info session
- Sat on a pathway opportunity programme shortlisting session

**I continue to hold a seat on around thirty committees and represent students on, among other topics, the rollout of Canvas. As always, I am also here to advise on any academic related issues so please don't hesitate to get in touch with any issues at [su.education@qub.ac.uk](mailto:su.education@qub.ac.uk) or 028 9097 3724.**

Go raibh maith agaibh,

*Jason*

## Meetings attended

Meeting	Dates
Lecture recording meeting CED	1 Nov
Partnership Induction Prep	4 Nov
Marketing	4 Nov
Biological Sciences School Rep	4 Nov
Partnership Intern Induction	5 Nov
DE Forum	5 Nov
Officers and Advice SU meeting	5 Nov
EMC	6 Nov
NUS-USI Manifesto Launch	6 Nov
Course Rep Forum AHSS	6 Nov
DLSPIG	7 Nov
Belfast marrow event	7 Nov
Voter registration meeting	7 Nov
DLWG	7 Nov
Meeting with Lucy Gault	7 Nov
Alumni mentoring scheme meeting	7 Nov
SSESW DE meeting	8 Nov
Student Digital Champion meeting	8 Nov
RAG review	8 Nov
Biological Sciences meeting	8 Nov
Development Weeks working group	9 Nov
UCU meeting	9 Nov
NUS-USI Strike Talks	11 Nov
CAG	11 Nov
SU Council	12 Nov
CED meeting	13 Nov
Academic Board	13 Nov
School Rep meeting	13 Nov
Course Rep Forum EPS	13 Nov
Partnership intern sweep	14 Nov
ARR SSCC Liaison	14 Nov
Student matter meeting	14 Nov
Video filming	15 Nov
Constitutional amendments meeting	15 Nov
Course Rep Training	18 Nov
Rep Budget meeting	18 Nov
Academic Council	18 Nov
Beyond the Binaries	18 nov
SU Sweep with DASA	19 Nov
VideoScribe meeting	19 nov
Course Rep Training	19 Nov
Helen McNeely meeting	19 Nov
Biological Sciences meting	19 nov
CAG	19 Nov
Beyond the Binaries	19 Nov
Shorlisting day for grad	20 Nov
EMC	20 Nov
Course Rep Training	20 Nov
NUS-USI strike talks	20 Nov

Beyond the Binaries Vigil	20 Nov
VR meeting	21 Nov
Assessment guide task and finish group	21 Nov
Course Rep Training	21 Nov
AHSS Student Town Hall event	21 Nov
Council Info Session	22 Nov
Rep Info Session on Strike	22 Nov
UCU Poster making	22 Nov
Mental health and the costs of marketization	25 Nov
Irish in the public space	26 Nov
CAG	26 Nov
PP Intern Interviews	27 Nov
Climate action strike	29 Nov
Rep Review catch up EPS	2 Dec
SU Management Board	2 Dec
Rep Review catch up MAE	2 Dec
SU Council	2 Dec
Theology Visit	3 Dec
Rep Review catch up HAPP	3 Dec
Rep Review catch up SSESW	3 Dec
Rep Review catch up MHLS	4 Dec
Rep Review catch up AEL	4 Dec
An Cumann Gaelach	4 Dec
EMC	4 Nov
MAE meeting	5 Dec
Pathway opportunity programme	5 Dec
ILO meeting	5 Dec
David Jones meeting	5 Dec
MHLS Dean of Education meeting	6 Dec
Partnership Student Engagement	6 Dec
Rep Review catch up Pharmacy	9 Dec
Rep Review catch up Psychology	9 Dec
Development weeks working group	9 Dec
Education with Impact meeting	9 Dec
Asylum Seeker Scholarship Info Sessions	9 Dec
UEB	10 Dec
Claire McLoughlin	10 Dec
DE Forum	10 Dec
Student and Staff Partnership Group	10 Dec
Careers guidance meeting	10 Dec
ILO meeting	11 Dec
DE Forum	11 Dec
Careers Focus Group	11 Dec
Rep Review catch up MDBS	11 Dec
Student Representation Workshop	12 Dec
Claire McLoughlin meeting	16 Dec
Pathway opportunity selection panel	16 Dec
USI VP AA meeting	16 Dec
Team meeting partnership interns	17 Dec
David Jones meeting	17 Dec
Tracy Galvin meeting	17 Dec
Team Away Day	18 Dec

End of semester meeting with AR assistant
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19 Dec
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