

Queen's University Belfast Students' Union

Officer Report

Student Officer Postgraduate



Period Covered By Report: 1 July 2019 – 31 October 2019

Gift Sotonye-Frank

Report Period: 1 July 2019 – 31 August 2019

Introduction

This is my first Officer Report for the 2019 Academic year. In the summer months when I began my role, majority of my time was spent receiving training and developing my plan of work and priority projects for the year ahead

As always feel free to get in touch with me via email at su.postgraduate@qub.ac.uk

The [Students' Union](#) website has information on my role, my Plan of Work for the year, how to contact me.

EVENTS / MEETINGS		
Date	Details of Activity (and outcomes for students)	Location
2/07/19	Meeting with Student Plus Director	Lanyon Building
04/07/18	Meeting with All Staff at QUBSU	QUBSU
04/07/19	Meeting with Graduate School staff team	Graduate School
05/07/19	Meeting with Events Manager of Graduate school to discuss plans for the year ahead.	Graduate School
16/07/19	Jordanian Society Launch(interacted with PGs)	Graduate School
17/07/19	SU Executive Management Committee Meeting	QUBSU
25/07/19	Meeting with ADVICE (Discussed my plans for the year)	QUBSU
25/07/19	Consultation with PGs to discuss plan for the year	QUBSU
29/07/19	Meeting of both Graduate School marketing team and QUBSU marketing	QUBSU
31/07/19	SU EMC	QUBSU
31/07/19	Meeting with Women's officer (PTO) and Athena SWAN QUB champion	MBC
1/08/19	Meeting with Staff at Queens Accommodation	QUBSU
1/08/19	Fresher's Brainstorming session	QUBSU
2/08/19	USI academic affairs officer and USI postgraduate officer meet Up	QUBSU

5/08/19	New Build Meeting with Director QUBSU	QUBSU
6/08/19	Dean of AHSS meet up	School of Education
6/08/19	Meeting with acting head of academic affairs	Admin building
7-8/08/19	SUT+ training	Ulster University
12/08/19	Meeting with Head of Estates	Admin building
13/08/19	Further planning meeting with Graduate school staff	Graduate school
14/08/19	Community Engagement Meeting	QUBSU
14/08/19	SU EMC	QUBSU
15/08/19	Meeting with CED lead	QUBSU
19/08/19	Media Training	Off campus
19/08/19	USI postgraduate Working group	Web conference
20-23/08/19	Annual Leave	holiday
26/08/19	Dean of Education MHLS meeting	90 Lisburn road
27/08/19	Meeting with Head of Estates(to discuss PG study spaces on campus)	Admin Building
28/08/19	Postgraduate Coffee Catch up at Graduate School	Graduate School
28/08/19	Meeting with Graduate School Manager	Graduate School
28/08/19	Meeting with Athena SWAN QUB champion	MBC
28/08/19	Networking event with QUB Accommodation RAs	The Speakeasy
29/08/19	Meeting with Student Voice to discuss PG representation	QUBSU
30/08/19	Meeting with Head of Public Engagement	QUBSU

Campaigns / Projects

CAMPAIGNS / PROJECTS	
Campaign / Project/Activities	Recent Progress
PG Drop in Session	<p>My drop in session runs 2pm-4pm every Tuesday at the Graduate school Group Room 7. The sessions have in many cases gone very well as PGs have found it to be a safe space to come in and have a chat on issues that they are dealing with. Till date I have had over 40 students walk in through the doors.</p> <p>All postgraduate students are welcome to any of the sessions and although I may not have all the answers to the different queries, I am able to signpost students to someone who can help.</p>
24 hour access to study spaces for PGs	<p>I led a campaign for 24 hour access to study spaces for postgraduate students in the months of August. Several meetings were held with the head and senior staff members of the Estate department. With much discussions and deliberations, we were able to reach a compromise by first opening the Graduate school for a period of two weeks as a pilot allowing PGs to work flexibly and which enabled them meet their deadlines for dissertation submission as well as other study goals.</p> <p>Further conversations are ongoing and I will give updates in my next report</p>

PGs Representation	<p>In partnership with the Education officer and the Graduate school, extensive planning and preparation was undertaken and a list of key contacts collated to disseminate to all the PGs.</p> <p>A new position was also created- The Postgraduate Forum Rep who will be elected during the general course /school/faculty rep elections and their duties have all been outlined on the QUBSU website.</p>
National Students' Union Campaigns	<p>I have also been involved with the USI postgraduate officer and the officer for Academic affairs to ensure that postgraduate students' welfare remains a priority across the universities in the island of Ireland. Some of the activities included meeting with other postgraduate officers and students during the SUT+ training held at Ulster University in Jordan's town.</p>
QUBSU Parents and Carers Network	<p>In August I communicated with members of the PCN via Facebook page with the information of the plans to have a first meeting and to discuss kinds of activities for the year that may be of interest.</p>
PG Weekly Update	<p>I send out a weekly update which is hosted on the Graduate School weekly update website. You can check out these updates at https://www.qub.ac.uk/graduate-school/information/Weekly-update/</p> <p>The interesting bit for me about the weekly update is that it showcases one postgraduate student each week and the research that they are each undertaking as well as the interesting opportunities they are involved in both at QUB and beyond.</p> <p>Please let me know if you would like to be featured in any of the weekly update by sending me a clear photo and a 100 words summary of your research and any other relevant activities you are involved in.</p>
Weekly officer Sweeps	<p>Every Monday at 10am-11am, I have met with the other officers in the team. This is a recurrent meeting where each union officer gets a chance to talk to the team about the projects they are working on and the ways in which each officer may require support from other officers in this team. It serves a forum for weekly updating each member of the priorities for the week by the president. On some occasions it has been impractical to meet at the same time on the Monday, so these have been rescheduled for other times in the week.</p>
Student Supervisorial Partnership Project	<p>I have been working in partnership with the Graduate School lead on this project to develop a tool kit to support both students and their supervisors to have an effective relationship that supports students throughout their degree.</p> <p>Plans are ongoing with regards to the plan of work for the execution of this project.</p> <p>If you are interesting in getting involved with this project please send me an email and I will get in touch with you regarding our meetings.</p>

Student Officer Postgraduate

Gift Sotonye-Frank



Period Covered By Report: *1 July 2019 – 31 October 2019*

Hello everyone,

I am so excited to be welcoming all old and returning students. A lot of the events I have highlighted in September have to do with welcome and induction of new postgraduate students as well as attending social events connected to postgraduate students' welcome. Hope you enjoy reading this report.

The [Students' Union](#) website has information on my role, my Plan of Work for the year and how to contact me.

EVENTS / MEETINGS		
Date	Details of Activity (and outcomes for students)	Location
2/09/19	Telephone Conversation with Head of Estates regarding 24 hour access to study spaces.	PFC
04/09/18	Team building day	QUBSU
04/09/19	Meeting with DARO	Lanyon Building
04/09/19	Induction Talk to PG at SSESW.	Emeleus
4/09/19	Meeting with Graduate school Marketing to discuss social media strategy and communication for 24 hour opening	QUBSU
4/09/19	PTES and PRES survey analysis	QUBSU
5/09/19	Open Day stall	Whitla Hall
6/09/19	Social Media content Planning with SU marketing	QUBSU
9/09/19	Meet Up with PG working Group on Supervisorial relationship Tool Kit	QUBSU
9/09/19	Health and Safety Training	QUBSU
10/09/19	Meeting with Appeal and Complaints staff	QUBSU
11/09/19	Buddy Scheme Preparation	QUBSU
11/09/19	SU EMC	QUBSU
11/09/19	Student Experience Meeting with Janette Elwood	Admin Building
12/09/19	International Buddy Scheme Meet Up	
12/09/19	Induction Talk PGT Education	MBC North Lecture Theatre

16/09/19	Graduate School Welcome and Induction	Graduate School
16/09/19	PGT Induction	City Hospital PG Centre
16/09/19	Faculty PG Education Subgroup	90 Lisburn Road
17/09/19	Induction Talk PGT Finance	PHY/LAMOR
17/09/19	SU Strategic Plan Sub group	QUBSU
18/09/19	Big Brunch	QUBSU
18/09/19	Internationalisation of the Curriculum	Lanyon Building
18/09/19	Induction Talk Sociology and Social Work PGT	SSESW
18/09/19	PhD Student Research Network	School of Law
18/09/19	Social Media Training	QUBSU
18/09/19	Graduate School Welcome week Activity	QUBSU
20/9/19	Induction Talk- Mechanical and Aerospace	Ashby
20/09/19	PG Fair	Graduate School
23/09/19	Induction Talk Medicine, Dentistry and Biomed PGT	Medicine Basement
23/09/19	IMPACT Journal Meeting	Graduate School
24/09/19	Run For Something	Graduate School
25-26/09/19	Fresher's Fair	South Dining hall
26/09/19	Induction Talk, Law PhD	School of Law
30/9/2019	AHSS Estates Meeting	38 University Road
2/10/19	Collaborative Provision Group	Senate Room
2/10/19	PGR induction	Riddle Hall
2/10/19	Black History Month Launch- speaker	Harty Room
3/10/19	PG 24 hour study space review	Graduate School
3/10/19	AHSS Student social space building walkabout	University Square
3/10/19	Welcome Reception for PG scholarship awardees	Graduate School
7/10/19	IMPACT Journal meeting	Graduate School
9/10/19	Law PhD training- What I wish I had Known as a PhD student	School of law
9/10/19	PG Advisory Board	Graduate School
10/09/19	World Mental Health Day Stall	QUBSU
14/10/19	Meeting with Student Voice	QUBSU
15/10/19	Student Engagement	MBC
15/10/19	Research and Postgraduate Committee Meeting	Lanyon Building
16/10/19	BHM 'Race in Sports@	Canada Room
16/10/19	Catch up with SU marketing	QUBSU
16/10/19	SU Management Board Meeting	QUBSU
17/10/19	Parents and Carers Network Lunch Time Catch Up	QUBSU
17/10/19	AHSS Social Space Audit	38 University Street
18/10/19	Prof. Dame Ingrid Allen Lecture (Annual Gender Equality Lecture	MBC
18/10/19	OMNI Strategy discussion	QUBSU
23/10/19	SU EMC	QUBSU
23/10/19	Staff excellence Judging Panel Meeting	Lanyon Building

23/10/19	International Welcome School of Biology	Lecture Theatre Chlorine Gardens
23/10/19	BHM Herstory	Graduate School
25/10/19	IMPACT Journal Meeting	Graduate School
28-29/10/19	PG Academic Rep training	QUBSU
28/10/2019	SU Council- Plan of Work Approved	QUBSU
30/10/19	AHSS student and staff partnership meeting	Newark room
30/10/19	BHM Closing event' Absent From the Academy	Queens Film Theatre
31/10/19	Annual Leave	holiday

Campaigns / Projects

Campaign / Project/Activities	Recent Progress
PG Drop in Session	<p>My drop in session runs 2pm-4pm every Tuesday at the Graduate school Group Room 7. The sessions have gone very well as PGs have found it to be a safe space to come in and have a chat on issues that they are dealing with. Till date I have had over 50 students walk in through the doors.</p> <p>All postgraduate students are welcome to any of the sessions and although I may not have all the answers to the different queries, I am able to signpost students to someone who can help.</p>
24 hour access to study spaces for PGs	<p>As a follow up to the Graduate school pilot that was ran in September as I stated in my last report, in partnership with the Graduate school, I am now working with the library and the Directors of Graduate studies to ensure that appropriate periods are established period(s) when 24 hour access to study spaces are granted to PGs throughout their academic calendar. I will also be meeting with head of the Library for further to discuss further opportunities for opening times. A next meeting is scheduled for the 15th of November 2019 I will provide further updates in my next report.</p>
PG Representation	<p>In partnership with the education officer and the Graduate school, the first exclusive training for PGs reps was organised on 28th and 29th of October. This was a huge success based on the feedback I received from some of the participants.</p> <p>A list of key school contacts was later sent out to all the PG reps to support them with who to approach within their school for help and support.</p> <p>A follow up session is being planned mid-term to get some feedback from the reps following the commencement of their role and to provide additional support where necessary.</p>

	<p>To increase PGs representation, a new position was created called the PG forum reps. These new position was filled by a PGs in each school who have as part of their responsibility, attendance at all PG forum meetings and also to liaise with other course and school reps in bringing forward issues to the PG Forum.</p> <p>I am compiling data from Drop-In PG sessions and feedback throughout the semester to advocate for students based on issues presented for successful policy changes</p> <p>Working to ensure successful applications to student-led Postgraduate Funding from the graduate School to fund SPPG projects</p> <p>With the creation of the PG Forum reps, one from each school, there has now been an increase in number of PGs academic representatives.</p> <p>I will be co-chairing the PG Forum and our first meeting is on the 13th of November This enables me to ensure voices of PGs are being listened to at QUB and that students feel like partners in their education.</p>
<p>National Students' Union Campaigns</p>	<p>NUS-USI (the national students' union in Northern Ireland) has recently launched a campaign to drive student voting. This campaign needs students to register and vote in the upcoming election on 12 December 2019. Please register to vote Here.</p> <p>This new campaign needs students to become involved as active citizens and electing the leaders that best represent their interests, so get involved.</p> <p>I have also been involved with the USI postgraduate officer to ensure that postgraduate's welfare remains a priority across the universities in the island of Ireland. Some of the activities included meeting with other postgraduate officers and students during the SUT+ training held at Ulster University in Jordan's town.</p> <p>Recently, USI launched a postgraduate Working Rights Charter. Information about this can be found here</p>

<p>QUBSU Parents and Carers Network</p>	<p>In October, I organised the first QUBSU Parents and Carers Network event which had about 12 persons in attendance. The main points coming through from that event were that student parents wanted to have a regular meeting time and it was agreed that once a month there will be a scheduled activity.</p>
<p>Partnership with the Graduate School</p>	<p>Excellent working relationship has been established with the Graduate School I have enjoyed extremely high support from all staff of the Graduate School and our partnership projects have continued to make progress as a result of these excellent working relationship.</p> <p>Some significant support that I have received include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing office space for each week (varied across September then in Group Room 7 on Tuesday each week) • QUBSU Branding visible across Graduate School all year around – plasmas, notice boards, study space and magazine stand • Social Media created for collaborative promotion of events related to PG students • Begin planning of tri-annual roundtables and themes of each, e.g. ‘Run for Something’; ‘PTES and PRES focus group’; ‘Student-Supervisor Contracts’; ‘Parents and Carers’ Networking’; • Monthly catch-up with Kara Bailey and Margret Topping - <p>Create strong relationships with all Graduate School staff to ensure students are signposted to SO PG for queries and concerns. Our most significant event since my last event was the “Run for Something: Become an academic representative. This was an afternoon event that had mostly new PGs in attendance. Many of whom put themselves forward as school, course, faculty and PG Forum reps and indeed many from among them have been elected into their roles. We will be hosting more Run for Something events in semester two and want this campaign to now be led by students</p>
<p>Committees and Working Groups</p>	<p>Committees and Working Groups</p> <p>Below is a list of committees and Working groups I sit on. I have been in attendance in most meetings that have been called and always listening and contributing in ways that are beneficial to the study body but in particular to the the postgraduate community that I represent always ensuring you’re your interest is well presented, and protected.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Board • Academic Council • Collaborative Provision Group • Courses and Regulations Group • Education Committee • Research and Postgraduate Committee • Executive Management Committee • Management Board • MHLS Postgraduate Education Sub-Group • Postgraduate Advisory Board • Postgraduate Forum • Student Partnership Project Group • Supporting Student Attainment Action Group • Internationalisation of the Curriculum
<p>Fresher's Fair and postgraduate Fair</p>	<p>Fresher's fair and postgraduate fair were held on different dates but these two events gave me the opportunity to meet and greet very informally new students to QUB. In particular the graduate fair provided an opportunity for many postgraduate students to stop and chat with me at our stall in the Graduate school. It was a very well attended event organised by the QUBSU and the Graduate School respectively.</p>