

## City University London Students' Union Standing Report

### Summary

This paper is a summary of the Students' Union's current activity. The following areas are covered:

- Sabbatical Officer Key Highlights/Priorities
- Updates on Recent Work

Two actions required.

### Recommended Action

Senate is asked to **note** and **discuss** the report.

**Publication: Open**

## City Students' Union Senate Report | May 2018

City, University of London Students' Union is an independent charity that works in partnership with City. The Union is student led, by both sabbatical and part-time elected student officers, with the support of a professional staff team to ensure we are positively impacting on the student experience. The following report outlines the Unions progress and priorities over the recent period.

### Sabbatical Officer Key Highlights/Priorities

The elected sabbatical officers, Olesea, Malek and Zulkaif, have action plans that further their manifestos and student priorities, these can be seen at: [www.citystudents.co.uk/student-voice/studentofficers](http://www.citystudents.co.uk/student-voice/studentofficers). Below are some of the sabbatical officer's highlights and priorities.

	Heading	Progress
1	<b>City Communities</b> (Strategic Priority 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have prioritised City Communities in the additional funding requested for 2018/19. In the spirit of co-creation, the Union wants to create a funding pot for students to run School based community-building initiatives. The Union has received positive feedback and will be funding one of the two community bids with the increased funding.</li> </ul>
2	<b>Lecture Capture</b> (Strategic Priority 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The approach across Schools is inconsistent and the Union would like to see improvements.</li> <li>The Union is looking to work with City to amend the existing opt-in Lecture Capture policy into an opt-out policy.</li> </ul>
3	<b>Graduate Teaching Assistants GTAs</b> (Strategic Priority 3 and 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ExCo has pledged by September 2018 that all PhD students who teach will be on university contracts (not Unitemps).</li> <li>GTA working group has been formed and includes representative from each School, the Union, UCU, PhD Student Officer, HR and Graduate School.</li> <li>The working group will aim to deliver this commitment in the interest of students.</li> </ul>
4	<b>UCU Industrial Action</b> (Strategic Priority 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Union President is a member of the newly formed Industrial Action Quality and Standards Working Group that ensures that the learning outcomes are not affected.</li> <li>The Union has ran a number of drop in sessions to assess the impact of the strike on students. The Union is supporting affected students to claim compensations.</li> </ul>
5	<b>External Speakers Process</b> (Strategic Priority 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The motion was passed in Student Members meeting to reduce the timescale of external speaker process.</li> <li>The Union's External Speakers Policy was reviewed and the amendments were approved by the Board of Trustees.</li> <li>The Union is working with City to try to reduce the timeframe of the external speaker process from 4 weeks to 3 weeks.</li> </ul>

## Vision 2020 Implementation

The following report provides an update on the work the Union has carried out to further the priorities of its strategic plan, which can be found at: [www.citystudents.co.uk/about-us/strategy](http://www.citystudents.co.uk/about-us/strategy).

### Priority 1: Experts in the student experience

#### Union Elections

The Union is pleased to report that the 2018 has been the Union's most successful election to date with 3545 students voting, which is 1320 more voters than the previous record set in 2017. Some of you may have already seen the results, but the full list of elected officers can be seen [here](#).

The sabbatical officers elect are:

President - Kristina Perelygina,

Vice President Education - Tuna Kunt,

Vice President Activities & Development - Nazia Bharde.

The Union would particularly like to thank City for its support and allow the Union to communicate the election in innovative ways, which had a positive impact on the voter turnout. Some of the photos below demonstrate this.



#### Induction and Handover

The sabbatical officers take office on 1 July 2018 after a short handover period with the existing officers starting on 18 June 2018. Until this point, they will be all working hard to complete their studies. As normal, they will be invited to the last Board of Trustees of the academic year. To ensure a smooth and successful induction we will be planning a thorough programme of training, activities and introductory meetings.

## Priority 2: Developing Communities

### The Beacon



The student newspaper must talk about real issues affecting the students, from raising awareness regarding mental health to fighting for Free Education, against the privatisation of public services, the biggest issue facing us in 2019-Brexit. The Beacon will offer its readers mix of politics, Union updates and talk about real issues.

The newly reformed paper is being led by the former President and current PGT student, Issy Cooke.

## Priority 3: Academic Experience Impact

### Academic Impact Awards

On May 24 at 5 pm in the Oliver Thompson Lecture Theatre, we are hosting the Academic Impact Awards, in partnership with Learning Enhancement and Development (LEaD). All members of Council are invited and should inform the Union President if you are able to attend. The Academic Impact Awards is a chance to reward members of staff and students that have helped shape the University academic experience, through their teaching, support, innovation and through representation. This year will be our 10th Awards Ceremony of this kind. Over 400 nominations were submitted and a shortlist has now been created.



### Academic Impact of the Union

The Union has made an effort to promote the Unions academic impact. This was however quite late so we are unlikely to see the return in this NSS, but it does build a foundation for future years. You can see this at [www.citystudents.co.uk/academic-impact/](http://www.citystudents.co.uk/academic-impact/). There are also a series of leaflets which were distributed during the election to further promote this.

## Priority 4: Students' next steps

### City Students' Union Leadership Academy

The Union has engaged in a pilot this year for our Leadership Academy. We're extremely grateful to our sponsors of this programme, Santander, for helping to fund this new initiative.

The Students' Union Leadership Academy, run in partnership with City Careers, has encouraged students to attend more than 50 training workshops this year, developing a range of skills linked to key employability competencies such as Leadership, Communication Skills, Ethical Behaviour, and Enterprise. Leadership Award participants took on voluntary positions of responsibility, as Programme Reps, Society Leaders, or Elected Student Officers, and led hundreds of self-directed projects, events and initiatives to improve City's student community and put their own skills into practice. In March, participants attended employability training debriefing workshops and learned how to articulate their skills effectively in competency

example format, later demonstrating their skills through an online submission on the Students' Union website.

Now that the first cycle has completed, the Leadership Academy pilot has been a success, and City Students' Union intend to fully roll out the programme - open to all City students - next academic year, starting September 2018. This year, the Leadership Award recognised 26 Student Leaders at our Students' Union Carrot Awards ceremony on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> April.

### **Students' Union Carrot Awards**

The Students' Union Carrot Awards were a great success. We received over 200 nominations and the event was enjoyed by all. We have completed an evaluation of the event and look forward to continuing to grow it in future years and increasing the University presence at the event. A special thank you to Susannah Marsden, Director of Student and Academic Services for stepping in last minute and providing a great speech on the value of the Union.

The Union would like to explore with the University the option for additional funding for this prestigious ceremony.



## **Priority 5: Supporting students**

### **University Mental Health Day**

The Union collaborated with the University in hosting a 2 hour event, in line with this year's theme: Community. At our stall, we spoke to students about Mental Health and gave out 100 goodie-bags. Each goodie-bag included a UMHD article with wellbeing tips; leaflets of University and Union Services; free gym pass to CitySport; branded notebook and pen; chocolate and playing cards. We also delivered a 'Whiteboard Campaign' where students finished the following statement, 'I will create a supportive community at City by...', took pictures and shared on social media for the chance to win a prize.

### **Union Advice Service**

We provide free, independent, impartial and confidential academic advice on academic appeals, academic misconduct, complaints, extenuating circumstances (ECs), fitness to practise, student conduct and disciplinary issues.

The mid-year impact report of the Union Advice with the key statistics and student feedback is attached to this paper in Appendix B.

## **Study Well**

Study Well is the Union's institution-wide campaign to support students' academic performance and overall wellbeing during the exams and assessment period. Chaplaincy, Sports and Leisure, Learning Success, Sodexo, Student Counselling and Mental Health and Sustainability also contribute to this initiative.

In addition to our annual petting zoo, we will have a dog cuddle room, revision and exams workshops, Union advice Q&A sessions, outdoor sessions, power nap sessions, mindfulness and many other activities. In total there are 116 sessions being run during this exam period (14 May – 8 June). This is one of the most student facing activities delivered across the institution and demonstrates excellent value for money.

This initiative is currently funded by DARO with money coming from the Worshipful Company of Saddlers in addition to a contribution from the Union. We have sadly been informed that this money is not guaranteed for next year and the total amount funded for both Study Well and leadership initiatives via DARO is being reduced by £3200.

## **Other Updates**

### **Annual Survey**

The Union is currently creating an annual survey, to gain insight into student opinion on aspects relating to the Union. This will be used to assess progress on the Unions' strategic plan and identify areas which we can improve upon.

### **Lay Trustee Recruitment**

The deadline to apply to be a Lay Trustee has now passed and we will be interviewing potential candidates in May. We opted to promote the role with a number of other Unions and are hoping this will yield better results.

### **Olesea Matcovschi**

Students' Union President 2017/18

City, University of London Students' Union (the Union) ran its Leadership Elections which elects the Executive Officers and additional non-representative positions from 12-16 March 2018.

## Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer

The following were appointed by the Board of Trustees to be the Returning and Deputy Returning Officer.

**Returning Officer:** Peter Robertson, National Union of Students  
**Deputy Returning Officer:** Philip Gilks, City Students' Union  
**NUS Contact:** Tim Cobbett

## Election Statistics

2016	
Number of Registered Students	18995
Voters	1592
Turnout	8.4%
Number of Candidates	31 (6 Full Time, 25 Part Time)
2017	
Number of Registered Students	18997
Voters	2225
Turnout	11.7%
Number of Candidates	40 (13 Full Time, 27 Part Time)
2018	
Number of Registered Students	19403
Voters	3545
Turnout	18.3%
Number of Candidates	27 (8 Full Time, 19 Part Time)

\*The City, University of London Director of Strategic Planning and Performance has confirmed that the most accurate figure for total eligible voters is 19,403.

## Complaints

Number of formal complaints submitted to the Returning Officer: 3  
 Number of complaints upheld: 1  
 Number of complaints partially upheld: 0  
 Number of official warnings issued: 0  
 Number of candidates disqualified or removed from the election: 0

## General comments

The 2018 Union elections were conducted by the elections team and Deputy Returning Officer from Union in accordance with the Articles of Associations, Bye-Laws and Regulations. They are overseen by an impartial third party Returning Officer from NUS. The Deputy Returning Officer has deemed the elections free and fair for voters with the complaints and evidence presented. This means voters were able to vote freely and fairly in this election.

This year has seen the Union's highest voter turnout on record of 3545 student voters, which is 1320 more than in 2017, and over double that of 2016. The election featured a strong, targeted campaign by the Union and promotional work.

The Union received 28 individual nominations by the deadlines to run as candidates, and 27 of these continued in the election.

### The results for the Full Time Executive Officer positions are:

**President** – Kristina Pereyagina

**Vice President Education** – Tuna Kunt

**Vice President Activities and Development** – Nazia Bharde

### Candidate Breakdown

Full Time Officers:

- Three men and five women.

All candidates:

- 19 were aged 18-21, 4 were aged 22-25, two were aged 26 and over and one did not declare.
- 15 were home, two were European, nine were overseas and one did not declare.
- 25 were full time students, one was part time and one did not declare.
- 24 were undergraduate, two were postgraduate taught and one did not declare.

If you wish to find out more about the candidates and those who have been elected please go to [www.citystudents.co.uk/elections](http://www.citystudents.co.uk/elections)

### Confirmation of fair election

I hereby declare that this election was run in a fair and democratic manner which satisfies the stipulations as laid out within the 1994 Education Act.

### Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer

**Position:** Deputy Returning Officer

**Name:** Philip Gilks

**Date:** 19 March 2018

Signature	P. Gilks
Date	19/03/18

## Appendix B. Union Advice - Mid-Year Impact Report 2017/18

### What We Do

We provide free, independent, impartial and confidential academic advice on academic appeals, academic misconduct, complaints, extenuating circumstances (ECs), fitness to practise, student conduct and disciplinary issues.

We help to empower students to find a way forward when they have trouble with their studies or university experience.

### How We Make a Difference

- Respond to students within less than 3 working days
- Explain the University's regulations and procedures
- Answer questions on academic issues
- Identify the options available in each situation outlining the strengths and weaknesses in a student's case
- Advise students on how to complete forms and write statements
- Provide feedback on their forms and evidence
- Accompany students to meetings and panel hearings to ensure they are treated fairly

### The Difference We Have Made So Far in 2017/18

#### Key statistics from the last 6 months (1<sup>st</sup> October 2017 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018)

- **293 new enquiries/cases** were handled (**76.5% increase** from 166 across the same period in 2016/17)
- **293 students** received advice from those new enquiries/cases (**82% increase** from 161 recorded across the same period in 2016/17)
- **577 emails** were exchanged **between students and Union Advice** (**101% increase** from the 287 recorded across the same period in 2016/17)
- **129 face-to-face appointments** took place (**55.4% increase** from the 83 recorded across the same period in 2016/17)
- **26 telephone advice** calls provided (**Over 5 times more** than 5 recorded across the same period in 2016/17)
- **9 panel hearings & 11 meetings** had a **student accompanied by an Adviser** (more than the 4 hearings and 0 meetings recorded across the same period in 2016/17)
- **37%** of enquiries/cases were for **academic appeals**, **34% extenuating circumstances**, **8% academic misconduct**, **11% complaints** and rest were from other issues including fitness to practise and changing course
- **52.2%** service users were **undergraduates** and **47.1%** were **postgraduates**

## Spotlight on the Increase in Demand and Categories of Advice

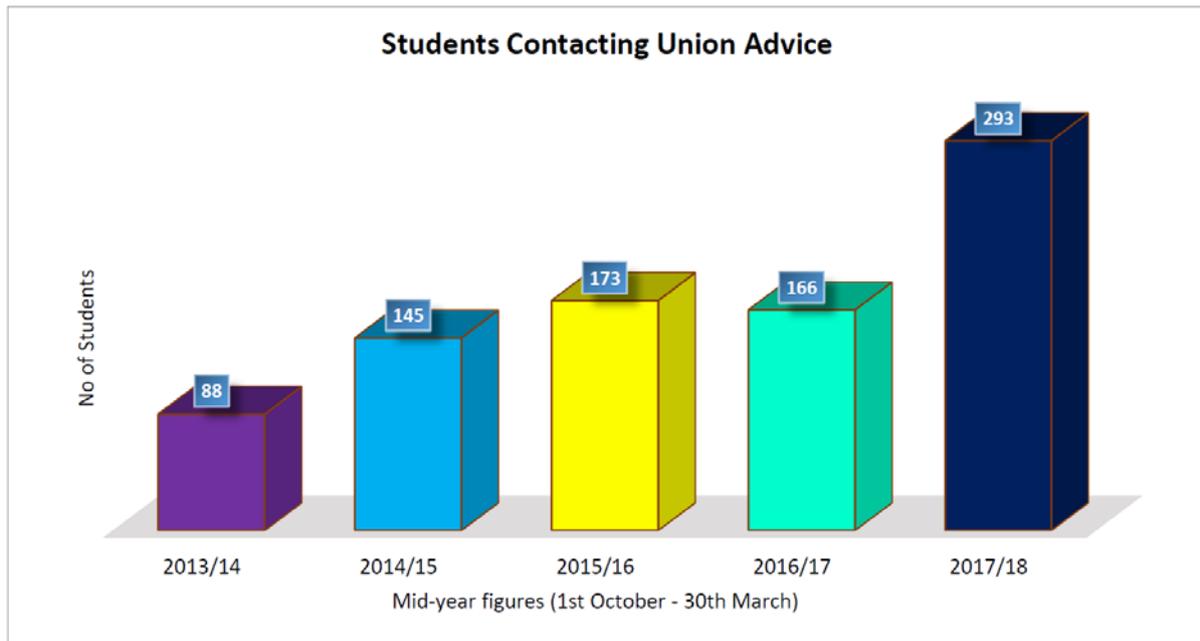


Figure 1. There was a 76.5% increase in the number of students contacting the Union Advice comparing to the last academic year.

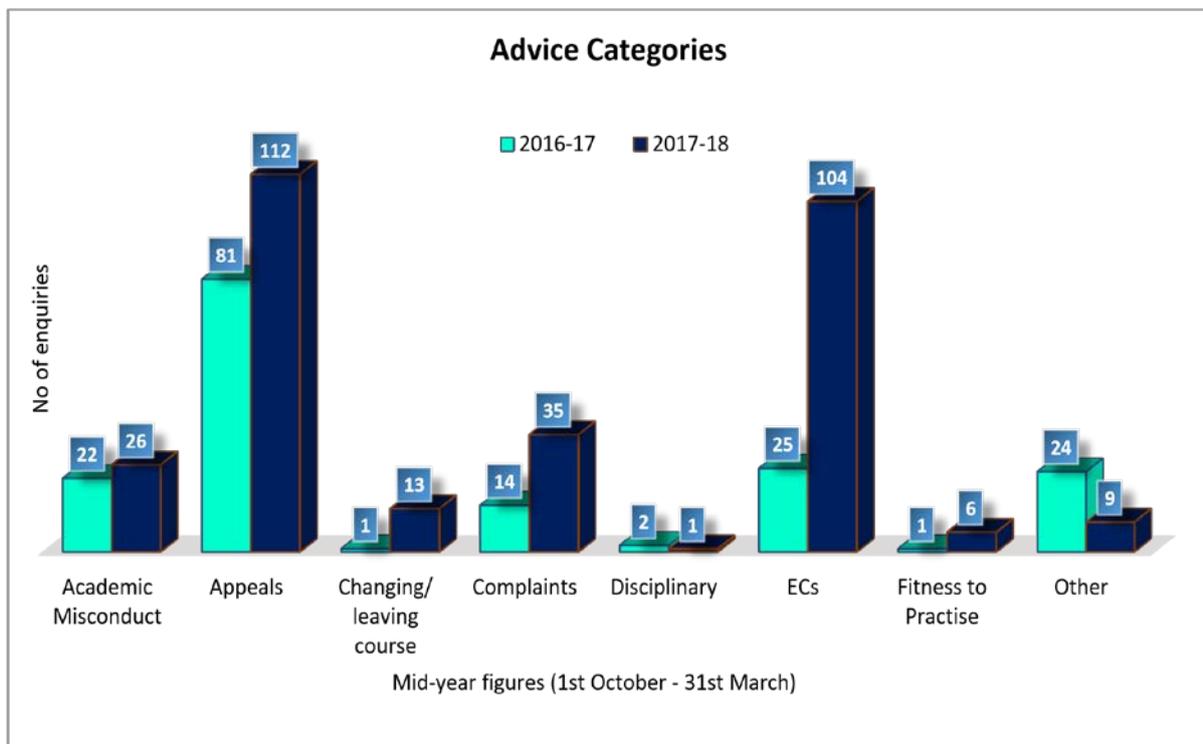


Figure 2. The breakdown of advice categories.

## Outcomes We Helped to Achieve

We contributed to students obtaining outcomes related to student retention and progression such as:

- Assisted students with academic appeals and EC forms resulting in students gaining additional assessment opportunities and not being withdrawn
- Helped students respond to allegations of misconduct and avoid the most severe penalties being applied such as expulsion
- Helped students respond to fitness to practice concerns and avoid being withdrawn
- Helped students resolve complaints about the University, improving their experience
- Directed students requiring specialist support to University services such as Learning Success and the Student Counselling and Mental Health Service.

## Customer Satisfaction

### Helped reassure students who felt less worried after contacting our service

Our survey respondents' high level of worry fell from an average of 9 out of 10 before contact with us to 3.8 out of 10 after contact with us (0 not worried and 10 extremely worried).

### Improved students understanding of the University's regulations and procedures

70% of respondents strongly agreed and the remaining 30% agreed we improved their understanding of the regulations and procedures. This means 100% of respondents improved their understanding of the regulations in their situation after contact with us.

### Delivered great customer service

Our average **customer satisfaction rating** amongst survey respondents is currently a very high **9.7 out of 10** (with 0 very dissatisfied and 10 very satisfied).

## In Their Own Words - Comments From Students About Our Service

*"I was very satisfied with the way student union advice handled my enquiries".*

*"...It is great to have someone who is there to help us through the procedure and bureaucracy".*

*"I would just like to say that I am grateful for the help I received from Liam he was very understanding of my situation and provided great service".*

*"My experience with Union Advice was very professional and informative I think more students would benefit from what they have to offer in regards to information that we may not be aware of."*