City University London Students’ Union Report

Summary

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

- Sabbatical Officer Key Highlights/ Priorities
- Vision 2020 Update and Implementation

Recommended Action

Education Quality Committee is asked to:

- **Note and discuss** the report.
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 Union’s progress and priorities over the recent period in relation to educational quality.

**Sabbatical Officer Key Highlights/ Priorities**

At the beginning of July, Kristina Perelygina, Nazia Bharde and Tuna Kunt took up their positions as the Union’s elected sabbatical officers. Kristina is the President, Nazia is Vice President Activities and Development and Tuna is Vice President Education. Since taking up their post, the officers have attended a number of internal and external training events to assist them in settling into their role, meeting key University members of staff and drafting their action plans to further their manifestos and student priorities. The officer’s manifestos can be found at end of page linked here: [https://www.citystudents.co.uk/student-voice/elections/leadershipelections2017/results/](https://www.citystudents.co.uk/student-voice/elections/leadershipelections2017/results/)

Kristina, Nazia and Tuna wish to use their experience as City University students to continuously improve the educational offer for City students and all have manifesto aims to achieve this end. These aims include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officer</th>
<th>Manifesto Aim</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kristina Perelygina</td>
<td>• Working to ensure the process for students undertaking written exams is simplified and transparent through the introduction of paper exam receipt, improving quality of information about examination procedures and implementing procedures to help reduce exam stress.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Nazia Bharde     | • Ensuring that the Students’ Union takes account of the needs and views of every student group, promote active engagement and participation and creating a supportive and encouraging environment for students to be fairly represented.  
  • Working to ensure there are more interventions to help with stress management and mental health throughout the year and not just during exams/assessments. |
| Tuna Kunt        | Working to:  
  • Increase lecture capture for all courses  
  • Ensure exam timetables are released earlier  
  • Ensure there is support for students who incur hidden costs through printing and textbooks |

Action plans for the above manifesto aims and others will be available soon.
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/

Priority One: Expert in the student experience

‘We will understand the needs of our students and the issues affecting them, and will be recognised experience at City, University of London.’

Annual Survey:
During the summer term, the Students’ Union launched its first ever annual survey, titled the City Students’ Union Annual Survey. The Union launched the survey to assess how the Union was benefitting the students, what student’s views of the Union were and use the survey as a tool for the Union to measure progress of its strategic priorities. The survey was completed by 4% of students and crucially students were positive about the Union’s work to represent them and two-thirds of respondents knew who their Programme Representative was.

Staff Support:
The staff support available to the Union to improve its research and information gathering from students continues to grow through funding from the University. A new Wellbeing and Insight Coordinator has been recruited and will begin work during or before Welcome Week 1. The Union is also currently recruiting for an Academic Representation Intern. The successful candidate who will be a current City Student and be in post for nine months, will provide administrative support to assist the Union’s work to develop the programme representative structures.

Engaging in National Research:
As previously noted, the Union collaborated with 27 other students' unions to deliver a ‘Student Lifestyles Survey’ in collaboration with trendance RESEARCH. The survey was separate from the Annual Survey aforementioned, and rather than looking inwardly at the Union’s service delivery, looked at the academic experiences of students and how they intersect. The areas of questioning included: extra-curricular activity, housing and transport experiences, the cost of being a student, recruitment & retention, employability, wellbeing and protected topics around experiences of hate crime and sexual harassment. Since the last report, the Union have received the findings of the report – the overarching headlines is that there are some really shocking figures for London. The Membership Development Team will be supporting the sabbatical officers in their London lobbying.

Autumn Leadership Elections:
Nominations for the October Leadership Elections open on the 17th September and close on the 8th October. There will be a range of positions available including Executive Committee Roles, Student Council Chair, Student Councillors and National Union of Student Delegate. Having an active Union Executive Committee and Student Council is vital in supporting priority 1 and the Unions ability to be experts in the student experience. The NUS Delegate position allow the Union to have a voice at a national level.

Priority Two: Developing Communities

‘We will create and develop communities at City in which every student feels they belong, feels supported and feels respected.’

Welcome Week:
Last year’s welcome week was a great success and the Union wish to build on this further this year. The Union have put together its biggest ever line up of events to kick-start City students year in style. The events taking place over two weeks’ and beginning on the 15th September will include huge parties, chilled days and fun activities. There has been lots early interest in wristbands.

The plans for the 2018/19 Fresher’s Fair are confirmed and the Union are hoping to build on the success of last year’s fair which saw 5000 students attend, 4000 welcome bags given out and great feedback received from staff and students. This year’s fair takes place between 20th-21st September, at the Business Design Centre in Islington, and will consist of big brands, societies, sports and university departments.

Further information on Welcome Week and Freshers’ Fair can be found here: https://www.citystudents.co.uk/welcome/
**Student Societies**

Student societies, a focus throughout our strategy, continues to be at the heart of what we do. The Union has 82 societies, the most in recent years. The ambition is to have 125 societies by the end of 2018/19 and increase the number of members per a society too. Society Leaders will be undergoing training in September to ensure they are well equipped to be effective in their role in the next academic year.

The Union is currently recruiting for a societies intern, to work for nine months, to aid societies in the planning and operation of events and activities among other tasks.

A full list of student societies can be seen at: [https://www.citystudents.co.uk/getinvolved/societies/](https://www.citystudents.co.uk/getinvolved/societies/)

**Priority Three: Academic experience impact.**

‘Every student will be able to identify how the Students’ Union has had an impact on their academic experience at City.’

**Programme Representative Development**

Programme Representatives continue to be a key priority of the Union. In the 2017/18 academic year there were a number of positive developments for the Programme Representative system including revised training program, an increase in the amount of programme representatives, new incentives and introduction of hoodies which Programme Reps could purchase to promote themselves on campus.

- The 2018/19 academic year will see further developments including:
  - The Union taking a leadership role in the election of the Programme Reps to further democratise the system and provide them with a greater level of independence
  - A Programme Representative Review project undertaken by the Union in partnership with Student and Academic Services
  - The introduction of new handbook to supplement the training they will receive.

**National Student Survey:**

City Students’ Union saw a 6.42% increase in student satisfaction in the 2018 National Student Survey (NSS) with the Union receiving one of the highest satisfaction results in London. The Union is now rated by its members as being in the top 25% of students’ union’s nationally (31 out of 146) and in London (3 out of 23) when looking at question 26 of the NSS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Actual value 2018</th>
<th>Actual value 2017</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The University of West London</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary's University, Twickenham</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City, University of London</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roehampton University</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London South Bank University</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Metropolitan University</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunel University London</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of East London</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middlesex University</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperial College London</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Greenwich</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston University</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen Mary University of London</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of Westminster</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldsmiths' College</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. George's, University of London</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birkbeck, University of London</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Holloway, University of London</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King's College London</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University College London</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of the Arts, London</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The London School of Economics and Political Science</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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This follows a year when the Union has seen unprecedented engagement in its student groups, activities and elections showing that the 2017/18 academic year was a real turning point for the Union.

The NSS results, released on Friday 27 July 2018, provide the response to a series of questions asked to all final year students about their experience at university, one of those questions is the following: ‘Q26. The students’ union (association or guild) effectively represents students’ academic interests.’

This is the second year this particular question has been asked; however, questions on the Union have been included since 2012. The Union has consistently scored in the bottom 25% of students’ union’s in London and nationally until 2017. The following is how strongly students agreed with question 26 for 2017 and 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>Increase/decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City, University of London</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Priority Four: Students’ next steps**

‘We will be a springboard to help students to plan and prepare for their future.’

**Student Leadership Academy:**

The City Students’ Union Leadership Award is an accreditation offered by City Students’ Union where students can utilise leadership roles and voluntary activities/achievements to develop competencies, including Leadership and 9 others.

Participating in the Leadership Award helps students to work on their personal development and employability alongside their studies, and gives them the tools to reflect on and articulate the skills. The Academy is being relaunched in September and registration for the 2018-19 Leadership Award will open to students on 1st September 2018.

Further information on the academy can be found here: [https://www.citystudents.co.uk/getinvolved/leadershipaward/](https://www.citystudents.co.uk/getinvolved/leadershipaward/)
**Priority Five: Supporting students**

“We will support students in their journey at City, University of London

**Union Advice Service:**
The Union Advice Service delivers independent academic advice to our student membership. Since October 2017, the service has had two full time staff members which has enabled the Union to deliver a service for more students.

**Key statistics from the mid-year 2017/18 (1st October 2017 – 31st 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% of service users were undergraduates and **47.1% were postgraduates**.
- 42% of students were from **SASS**, 21.1% from **SMCSE**, 17.1% from SHS, 11.3% from Cass and **8.5% from City Law School.**

*All comparisons with 2016/17 made across the same period - 1st October 2016 to 31st March 2017.

**Volunteer Advice Caseworker Programme 2017/18**

The Advice Service recruited 6 postgraduate law students for our Volunteer Advice Caseworker Programme in November. They attended a group training session in December and from February to April they attended one to one volunteering/training session which included responding to email enquiries under supervision, case discussion, observing appointments and conducting mock/role play appointments in preparation for assisting the service during the busy summer period after their exams.

**Customer Feedback**
The Customer Feedback (43 survey respondents) from the same period 1st October 2017 – 31st March 2018.

- Our survey respondent’s 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).
- 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.
- 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).