

City Communities Working Group –Terms of Reference

Developing the sense of community in the student body is of paramount importance to City University London, both in terms of student satisfaction and to enhancing the educational experience that we offer.

The Education and Student Strategy (ESS (2014-20)) identifies an ambitious programme of work that has been established to enhance provision in all areas; one of which being the enhancement of the University's communities.

Many of our students experience City University London primarily as a 'commuter university', and so it is essential that we find creative and long-lasting ways to build a sense of community and belonging. Where this is already happening in the University, it is important to locate good practice that could be implemented elsewhere. Similarly, there may be other HEIs in the UK or abroad that are also working on addressing these issues.

This paper outlines the Terms of Reference and the priorities of activity over the coming year.

City Communities Working Group

Context and introduction

Developing the sense of community in the student body is of paramount importance to City University London, both in terms of student satisfaction and to enhancing the educational experience that we offer. The Education and Student Strategy (ESS (2014-20)) identifies an ambitious programme of work that has been established to enhance provision in all areas; one of which being the enhancement of the University's community(ies). Many of our students experience City University London primarily as a 'commuter university', and so it is essential that we find creative and long-lasting ways to build a sense of community and belonging. Where this is already happening in the University, it is important to locate good practice that could be implemented elsewhere. Similarly, there may be other HEIs in the UK or abroad that are also working on addressing these issues.

1 Terms of reference and membership

1.1 Terms of reference

The City Communities Working Group will meet at least four times annually and will report directly to Education and Student Committee and as well as make recommendations for action to ExCo. The Working Group will have the following remit:

- 1) Determining priorities for the given academic year
- 2) to take forward and report progress on the recommendations made by Education and Student Committee;
- 3) to take oversight and responsibility for the development of activities/projects that align with the step-change activities identified by the City Communities 'hub' of the ESS;
- 4) to identify, agree and monitor (in alignment with Performance Indicators and Measures of Success identified) projects contributing to the City Communities 'hub' of the ESS, and to agree on new project proposals;
- 5) to support the enhancement of existing areas of strength identified (as relevant) within the Strategy;
- 6) to commission/undertake appropriate further research in the area of the 'student community', and in particular to identify the *specific* ways in which students identify themselves with the University (i.e. by School, by department, by discipline, etc) in order to inform decisions and recommendations made by the group
- 7) to review internal communication channels with students and identify ways of enhancing provision in this area;
- 8) to investigate whether we are making maximum use of technology to promote student community, including consultation with Learning Enhancement and Development (LEaD) and Information Services (IS);
- 9) to develop an action plan that includes: 1) short term goals to be enacted during the academic year; and 2) long-term goals aligning with the ESS – this will be a 'live' document and updated regularly to report progress;

- 10) to report to/consult with School Learning and Teaching Committees and Professional Services on developments and recommendations associated with the step-change activities identified by the City Communities 'hub' of the ESS;

- 11) to track and report on progress to the University Projects Board and Education and Student Committee, and to review relevant reports from Learning and Teaching Committees and Professional Services to establish progress towards the hub destination.

1.2 Membership

SU President (Chair)	Issy Cooke
Academic Champion (Co-Chair)	Lorenzo Trapani
SU Vice President Education	Umar Yunas-Chaudery
SU Vice President Activities & Development	Yusuf Ahmad
Representation & Democracy Manager	Craig Stewart
Student representative from each School	
• Cass Business School	TBC
• School of Arts and Social Sciences	TBC
• School of Health Sciences	TBC
• City Law School	Hadia Chaudhry
• SMCSE	TBC
Liberation Officers	
• Women's	Ramsha Khan
• LGBT	Astrid Crowley
• Black, Minority and Ethnic Students	TBC
• Disabled Students	Clémence Rouaux
• International	Elizabeth Frumson
• Ethics and Environment	TBC
• Sports Officer	Samira Salasel
Staff representative from each School	
• Cass Business School	Rob Garden
• School of Arts and Social Sciences	Kate Kelsey
• School of Health Sciences	David Ross
• City Law School	Dr Grietje Baars
• SMCSE	TBC
Representative from Marketing	Demetri Petrou
Representative from Property & Facilities	Jason Clarke
City Sports, Student and Academic Services	Bill Thompson
Learning Enhancement and Development	Pam Parker
Deputy Head of Student Experience, Student and Academic Services	Shereen Sally
Development and Alumni Relations	Mehrangez Rahman
Student Experience Administrator (Secretary)	Megan Butler

Priorities for 2014-15

1) Free Wednesday Afternoons

To Free Wednesday afternoons in student timetables for co-curricular activity. This will enhance our students' employability by equipping them with skills that improve future applications. This will keep us in line with the sector and improve student satisfaction and experience based on feedback previously received.

2) Celebrating Equality and Diversity

Exploring the University's Strategic Equality Objective particularly point 5: 'working with the Student Union to celebrate diversity.'

<http://www.city.ac.uk/about/city-information/equality/equality-objective>

Ideas for this include working around Students' Union campaigns that are currently dated for the start of second term this academic year and will be based upon a development in last year's activities. Please see below for an example of a national campaign in which other Universities have adopted for examples on how this can be achieved and the benchmark and which we can strive towards.

<http://www.oneworldweek.net>

3) Improving Communication

To build communication within the student community internally and externally; this involves putting City University London student community on the map to improve brand reputation which is one of the key aims of the working group. We would like to look and communicate student issues but also recognise and reward positive things happening in the institution and the sector through promotion and strategy. We anticipate this will improve engagement and feedback levels.

City Communities

Destination

Our Schools, Programmes, Professional Services and Students' Union work collaboratively to offer a range of opportunities for our students beyond their academic studies, to help them develop as rounded, reflective and confident individuals who see their journey at City as part of a meaningful, lifelong relationship with us.

Through step-change activity we will help our students maximise the potential of their time here at City, to develop their talent and engage with communities and opportunities characterised by:

- A diverse range of co-curricular social, cultural, volunteering, representation, professional development, sporting and wellbeing activities
- Opportunities for our students, staff and local community to work together
- Supporting students to develop their own communities and societies at programme, departmental, School and institutional level
- Opportunities for our students to reflect on their social responsibility and engage in initiatives and activities associated with environmental sustainability and development
- Recognition of achievement, celebrating our students' successes and enabling them to reflect on their own development
- A range of mechanisms for students to engage with us, provide their feedback and contribute to decision-making as part of our commitment to working in partnership with them
- Opportunities for students to take part and develop as engaged, civic minded participants in our internal and external communities

Step-change activity

1. Comprehensiveness and integration of information about activities and opportunities available to staff and students provided by the University and the Students' Union (including social media and technology platforms)
2. Supporting and encouraging student-led initiatives, student representation and activities which will enhance the development of leadership skills
3. Developing a strong student community through enhancements to our dynamic and inviting student spaces and facilities, including our CitySports facility and offer
4. Providing opportunities for our students to reflect on environmental sustainability and to engage in sustainability initiatives
5. Providing opportunities for students to engage in and build communities through clubs and societies and enhancing our offering in this area
6. Providing a range of co-curricular activities, including internal and external events and networks which maximise on our location in the City of London
7. Building on the partnership between the University and the Students' Union through fostering a well-defined and shared understanding of our roles, increasing collaboration and celebrating success together.

We will also continue to foster areas of strength in relation to:

8. Fostering a culture where staff and students are able to challenge and innovate
9. Celebrating the success of our students and staff
10. Building partnerships with the local community