

Students' Union Standing Report

Summary

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

- Student Voice team
- Opportunities team
- Welfare
- Campaign - Library

One action required.

Recommended Action

Senate is asked to **consider** the report.

Publication: Open

Student Voice

- Launching a Commercial Essay Competition in February 2017
- Supporting School Representative Officer's to plan end of year annual events, e.g. SHS Ball
- Annual General Meeting to take place on Thursday 17th November 2016
- Campaign on changes to Library opening hours, SU petition has received great interest
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PROGRAMME REPS REPORT

STATS

As of 15th November 2016, the Total number of Programme Reps Elected is **656**.

By School:

SCHOOL	REPS 2016-17	REPS 2015-16	REPS 2014-15
Cass Business School	154	163	160
City Law School	51*	62	79
School of Arts and Social Sciences	208	186	190
School of Health Sciences	156*	156	149
School of Mathematics, Computer Science and Engineering	87*	87	92
TOTAL NUMBER OF REPS ELECTED	656	654	670

*Indicates that we are awaiting further representatives' details from programmes in that School.

TRAINING

All Programme Reps have been offered training. We ran initial training sessions in October, as well as launching the Online Training option, as a way to support those representatives who are distance learners and as a way to increase the number trained. We have found this to be particularly popular with re-elected representatives and Postgraduates. We have even discovered we have a representative who commutes from Russia.

After 3 weeks of Training so far, we have trained:

SCHOOL	REPS TRAINED	REPS 2016-17	PERCENTAGE
Cass Business School	86	154	56%
City Law School	38	51*	75%
School of Arts and Social Sciences	109	208	52%
School of Health Sciences	79	156*	50%
School of Mathematics, Computer Science and Engineering	49	87*	56%
TOTAL NUMBER OF REPS TRAINED	361	656	55%

It is key to note that we have been receiving representatives' names in batches, including at the time of writing, and are still working to get those who have recently started their roles trained, by offering further sessions this month.

In this training, we spend an hour outlining the role of a Programme Rep, covering such things as:

- The City University Code on Student Representation
- How to collect balanced feedback and present this
- The ABCD of Effective Feedback (Accurate, Balanced, Constructive and De-personalised)
- What the different Committees are
- The different aspects that define Student Voice
- Tools and support resources available to Reps (e.g. Moodle)

Further Information

- The SU are aiming for at least 1 rep on all courses at City by the end of the Academic year. This will ensure better student representation across the University and further opportunities for the student experience to improve as a whole. The aim to have at least 1 rep on all courses is to support the joint aim of the SU and University to continue to improve student satisfaction overall.
- Online training is live on Moodle and is working well for reps, especially commuter and part-time students. The learning and development of skills has been incorporated into the training and reps are encouraged to use and promote opportunities/services at City, such as the Careers Service. The SU will continuously support reps throughout the year to ensure they are receiving satisfactory support to succeed in their roles. An end of year survey will be developed to gain feedback on whether reps feel the role has enhanced their employability prospects.
- Welcome Receptions for School Staff/Students took place and all Departmental/Academic societies have also been invited to attend. Staff are encouraged to build relationships with reps and society committee members in order for potential collaboration going forward. The SU will meet with and encourage all Schools and Departments to support the work on this over the year.
- By-elections took place in October 2016. Union Council and NUS Delegates have been elected for this academic year to hold the SU executive to account and allow City the opportunity to represent City students on a National platform.

Student Opportunities

- The Students' Union (SU) has 89 societies this year, with 59 established societies continuing activities from last year. We now have 30 new societies and extended the deadline by a week.
- 50% of society leaders have been trained. I aim to increase the level of support and training provided for societies by having further training sessions.
- SU's annual RAG Week will take place on November 28th to December 2nd. The SU will be raising money for Mind (a mental health charity) and Side by Side (who helps with the refugee crisis in France).
- The relaunch of Student Media is making progress. We have recruited editors and the SU is now working on the many structures that need to be in place for the effective running of Student Media.
- The SU has been working with various university departments for the implementation of refugee scholarships. The SU is engaging with relevant organisation such as Student Action for Refugees (STAR) to see how we can promote these scholarships to those in need and how we can communicate and market these scholarships.

- The SU has been working with the Careers Service in developing a collaborated leadership project. £5000 has been secured from Santander Universities after a proposal submitted by the SU. This funding will be used to support the leadership project.

Welfare

Union Support Service

The Students' Union has an independent, free and impartial advice service that we run called the Union Support Service (USS). The USS gives independent academic retention advice, and at a strategic level is aimed at working with the university to improve its retention policies and procedures, and provide feedback. Currently the USS is staffed by 1 full time staff member (1 FTE), and a small group of volunteers who are recruited at the beginning of the year. These volunteers are typically students from Grays Inn who are studying the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC), as it gives them work experience relevant to their field of study as it is an opportunity to give them pro-bono experience. The SU is looking to extend the USS from being located only on the main campus, to also having a presence on the other two campuses of the university – Grays Inn, and Bunhill Row. This expansion will start off in the form of having a stall/presence at these other two campuses for one day every week or two weeks with the vision of trying to support more students academically, and increasing the SU's presence to students who have limited interaction with the SU.

This year, the SU and the USS are beginning to work further on preventative work around the area of progression, as we have identified that it is just as important to support students in a way that we aid to further their understanding of academic processes (Appeals, Extenuating circumstances, etc.), so therefore they wouldn't need as much support from the USS. It is worth noting that this work is in a very early stage, and requires extensive further development.

Union Support Service statistics over the past year (November 2015–November 2016):

- **314 academic cases with repeat visits** (i.e. 314 individuals have contacted the USS advisor by email, phone, face to face) – This figure **does not** reflect the total number of appointments that these 314 students have had with our advisor, and **only** takes into account the number of individual cases
- **103 academic inquiries** (i.e. 103 students only contacted our USS advisor once, mostly for an inquiry that could be dealt with by a single response)
- **On average, 24 new academic cases opened per month – October was the peak with 40 newly opened cases**
- **On average, 9 new academic inquiries per month – September was the peak with 34 new enquiries**

Graduate Library closure

As of the 30th September, the university made the decision to close down the Graduate Library due to the Sebastian Street project as it is located in the current site for the new building that is to be erected. This has resulted in many Postgraduate students (Specifically Postgraduate Taught/Masters students) being left without a dedicated space to study and are hence very unhappy. The SU and the university are currently looking into alternate spaces for use as a replacement to this missing library, as currently, the main library provisions will become insufficient when the January exam period hits. To add a bit of context to this, the Graduate Library had 50 desks (Some of which had computers), and these saw roughly a few hundred students use them at the peak of its use. The SU is determined to ensure that the university finds an alternate space for use for the Graduate Library, as it will otherwise cause frustration of the main library being too congested, and hence lead to lower NSS scores for the university as Undergraduate students won't have

enough space to study. The SU currently has a survey online to gather Postgraduate student feedback on this to gather data on why Postgraduate students require this space – It so far has over 120 responses in under a week.