The Students’ Union Trustee Board have been looking at Union development over the past six months. The following strategy hopes to promote student involvement and representation in a challenging environment, extend service and improve student engagement.

Trustees want the Union to be the centre of activity and a major part of every student’s experience at London Met, while ensuring development and activity is sustainable and addresses student needs.

At present Trustees have agreed 3 key areas or themes for Union development. While some of these themes will have crossover of activity within them, they provide a useful way of grouping activity.

**STUDENT VOICE**

**ACTIVITY**

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

To underpin this development Trustees are enacting a number of changes to the representational model and support structures of the Union. These changes will facilitate student involvement and representation at a grass roots level, placing officers and Union staff at the heart of University activity.

If you have any comments please let me know by emailing me at: president.su@londonmet.ac.uk

Jason Jackson

*SU President and Chair of Trustees*

**BACKGROUND**

The primary function of any Students’ Union is to represent its members effectively to the university and to the wider community. In doing this it should affect positive change and therefore impact on its members lives and communities.

We must therefore develop activity that brings about positive change. To do this we should be ensuring that the democratic process and representation structures of the Union are accessible and effective, thereby empowering students and their communities to make a difference.

**WHAT WE WANT (AIMS)**

**OFFICERS WHO ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE STUDENT BODY AND ITS COMMUNITIES AND WHO ARE FULLY AND EFFECTIVELY ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR PERFORMANCE**

How will we achieve this:

- Implement findings of the review of officer roles, portfolios and representational models for the elections in 2014 (see below)
- Promotion of elections to reflect new model and to develop approaches that target underrepresented groups
- Active “leadership” programme for development of new officer “talent” especially in underrepresented groups i.e letter writing, election academies, training, talent spotting
- Developing an active women’s campaign that promotes leadership and opportunity and links with NUS women’s campaign activity
- Ensure that officer structures link effectively with student communities (faculties, interest groups, societies, etc) ensuring the student voice is heard and acted on, including the creation of specific “Hub” committees that are staff supported, in addition to the development existing forums such as Societies Forum
- Introduction and implementation of an accountability model for officers
- Impact review of new structures and effectiveness
TO MAKE THE STARS SYSTEM THE BASIS FOR AN EFFECTIVE VOICE FOR STUDENTS, ON UNIVERSITY AND UNION ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT

How will we achieve this:
• Continue to facilitate and develop the StARs system, ensuring students have input and achieve positive outcomes in areas of academic development.
• Develop clear links to officers and StARs via Hub and community groups and committees, ensuring these committees have clear remits and objectives.
• Developing effective and reportable processes that link the university / community committee roles and feedback which links to officer accountability.
• Develop a system that effectively records StARs concerns and comments, ensuring these are acted on and that outcomes are reported as part of wider impact assessment.

TO CREATE REAL POSITIVE CHANGE FOR STUDENTS BY RELEVANT AND EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNING, LOBBYING AND RESEARCH

How will we achieve this:
• Produce an annual campaigns calendar for all campaigns, including awareness campaigns on a Hub and University wide basis.
• Regular research (survey, focus groups, etc) on issues affecting students as a base for engagement and discussion with the university including an annual SU “satisfaction” survey.
• Develop a set of impact measures so the SU can know it is making a difference.
• Ensure effective staff support for Hubs, campaigning and lobbying activity.
• Develop a campaigns committee and approval process that includes reference to members in a priorities ballot.

TO ENSURE ALL STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO IMPROVING SUPPORT WHILE AT UNIVERSITY

How will we achieve this:
• Liaise with the University to ensure advice and support provided by both parties is relevant and complementary.
• Ensure a joined up approach on awareness campaigns that promote available services.
• Develop with Student Services and other stakeholders internet based advice that is accessible to students making it easier for students to find the help they need.
• Explore how we can effectively offer student-to-student (peer to peer) support (on a Hub basis) and how this can boost student retention and well-being in conjunction with Student Services.

TO BECOME A PARTNER AND CRITICAL FRIEND OF THE UNIVERSITY MAKING SURE REGULATIONS, POLICY AND PROCEDURES, ACADEMIC OR OTHERWISE REFLECT STUDENT CONCERNS

How will we achieve this:
• Ensuring an SU rep is on disciplinary panels.
• Developing the liaison function of Management Group as it changes its role.
• Keeping students informed so they are less likely to commit academic offences.
• Running twice yearly Hub based workshops on misconduct and plagiarism with the support of colleagues in CELT.

TO UNDERSTAND AND ACTIVELY ENGAGE WITH THE STUDENT COMMUNITY DEMONSTRATING OUR ROLE AND MAKING THE UNION A PLACE STUDENTS FEEL THEY BELONG

How will we achieve this:
• Develop a “Hub” centred support and representation model that reflects where students are and get both staff and officers out of the office offering services where students need and want them.
• Letting students know how the Union works and what it does for them, ensuring there is clear SU branding and identity and a focused media and marketing support.
• Develop an impact (outcome, what we said, what we did) recording system that is used by all.
• Publish an annual Impact Report detailing the positive changes the Union has made through officers, representatives and initiatives.
• Celebrate Hubs, student groups and communities by promoting their achievements at our annual awards events.
• Work in partnership to ensure “Welcome Week” activities are developed to improve the feeling of community and belonging.

OVERALL MEASURES OF SUCCESS BY 2017

• 20% of all students will vote in annual officer elections.
• 50% of all students will say they are able to have some influence on issues in the University.
• We will see a 25 place improvement to NSS results.
• 70% of all students will say that the SU contributes positively to their time.
• 70% of all students will agree that it is easy to access advice.
• Less cases and panels, Total level of complaints to OIA go down by 30%.
• More representation of groups / communities in Exec, Committees, etc.
• To increase participation by women to 50% or better at all levels of representation.

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ACTIVITY

Activity covers all the opportunities available in the Students’ Union from student staff to student volunteering in media and campaigns. These activities provide a chance for students to try new things and gain skills for employability and life.

WHAT WE WANT

THE STUDENTS’ UNION (HUBS) TO BE SEEN AS A CENTRE FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN A DIVERSE RANGE OF SOCIETIES, MEDIA, LEISURE, SPORT AND OTHER ACTIVITIES AND THAT THE RANGE AND QUALITY OF THESE OPPORTUNITIES IMPROVES

How will we achieve this:
- Establishing a clear vision / objectives for societies (Hub) development to underpin a wider review
- Review our current support arrangements, ensuring effective staff support for societies that has access to development expertise
- Clarify staff and officer roles with better descriptions that fit the need of the organisation and reflect the Hub model
- Simplifying and removing bureaucracy in societies paperwork
- Develop the capability to take on sports teams so we can provide sporting activity within an SU framework
- Developing a full and meaningful tasters or Give It A Go programme at each Hub to drive membership and society creation this is to run in intro week and over first month of term 1
- Encouraging funding and seeding activity to create sustainable new societies based in Hubs with a focus on faculty based societies in year 1 and 2
- Review our societies training programme and ensure there is an effective support package for running a society and ensure these materials are online and available at each Hub
- Require societies to achieve some minimum standards including membership funding activity, dates of meetings, etc
- Developing partnership with faculties in each Hub to promote faculty led societies and opportunities
- Review support and structures for media and other opportunities
- Implement recommendations to widen opportunity for media activity and professionalise output

TO DEVELOP THE OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS TO LEARN SKILLS AND TO RECOGNISE THESE. THEREBY IMPROVING STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY AND LIFE SKILLS

How will we achieve this:
- Look for opportunities for volunteering in casework and advice with Student Services
- Review the Union’s processes for recognising students and volunteers achievements, including a review of the Union awards scheme
- Develop programmes of training and accreditation that support SU volunteers (PT officers, media, etc) and Student staff ensuring transferable skills are recorded and recognised
- Seek nationally recognised accreditation where appropriate for our opportunities, i.e Investing in Volunteers accreditation
- Work with Careers to host skills training and employer led events

IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND RANGE OF SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITY FOR STUDENTS, THEREBY IMPROVING SOCIAL COHESION

How will we achieve this:
- Look to review involvement with the Rocket and its part in the SU and developing student events
- Develop links to local community through radio and media activity working with societies and Hubs to create events
- Involving more students with families by holding events such as an SU family day so we better understand their needs

OVERALL MEASURES BY 2017

- 50 societies and activities and at least 10 per Hub
- 20% of all students will be participating in societies, sports clubs or volunteering projects
- 200 SU volunteers trained and accredited
- Awards and accreditation for Students’ Union volunteers through Reach Volunteering and HEAR
- Have in place at least 5 annual employability events with careers
- Hold annual SU family day
- Have 3 regular and ongoing community projects
In order to achieve our objectives and effectively support student communities and activities, the foundations of the Union must be sustainable and secure. We must develop our financial, HR, support and communication (marketing) functions to ensure that our services are effective, sustainable and well used. Our reputation with the University as our primary funder and a key stakeholder should be based on sound and professional operational management and the provision of relevant and well-run services.

The Union should be an organisation that attracts, rewards and retains the best people to help it reach its goal of putting students first. Sustainability is also about ensuring we have a positive impact on our environment and wider community.

A RECOGNISED AND QUALITY STUDENTS’ UNION

How will we achieve this:
- Enter and achieve a Silver Award in the NUS Quality Students Union Model
- Demonstrate our commitment to being an excellent employer by achieving Investor in People status
- Demonstrate our commitment to volunteers by achieving Investor in Volunteers status
- Ensure we have effective, independent but linked policies on H&S and equal ops

A SUSTAINABLE AND SUITABLE RESOURCE AND SUPPORT STRUCTURE

How will we achieve this:
- Ensure we have an understanding of funding levels for the next 3 years
- Submit and seek agreement on a funding model that supports activity and strategy with Board of Governors
- Ensure our staffing structure is financially sustainable in the long term and represents the needs of the organisation and its strategic direction and reflect the financial model agreed by Governors
- Introduce a dashboard of KPI’s for performance that are regularly reported so we can monitor and adjust performance in line with strategic targets and measures
- The production of regular and accessible management accounts within 3 weeks of the close of each month
- Ensure the Union’s “green” footprint is as small as possible and our activities are environmentally sustainable, achieving our NUS Green Impact status
- Ensure services are where students need them by reviewing our provision of service and representation and introducing a “Hub” model that puts service and support where students are
- Review our current facilities and estates provision ensuring they are suitable for activity and lobby for what we need to deliver efficient services on a Hub basis
- Develop a plan to extend external funding streams such as NUS Extra and marketing income

OVERALL MEASURES

- 50% of students aware of Union green policy
- Achieve awards and recognition (IIP, IIV, NUS)
- Secure funding model agreed at Board of Governors
- Achieve green Impact status
- Management accounts available to meetings within 3 weeks of the month end
- KPI dashboard in place and used
- Training and development plan for staff and officers in place
To underpin these strategic themes Trustees have been reviewing the current representational models. Stakeholder analysis and demographic research have given rise to concerns in the breadth of representation and a concern that many groups are underrepresented or not represented at all. There is also a need for the Union to respond to overall cutbacks in University funding which mean it can no longer sustain a five officer model. Officer numbers are already above the norm for a Union of London Met’s size and funding. It should be noted that the university has reduced in size and therefore funding over recent years with student numbers dropping to 17,000 from 30,000 there is unfortunately no way the Union can effectively argue or sustain 5 officers.

To address this Trustees have agreed the following model as basis. The model is based upon communities or “Hubs” with each Hub representing an academic or geographical community.

- CASS Hub (Central House)
- FBL Hub (Moorgate)
- Holloway Hub (FLSC, FSSH)

In year 1 there will also be President who will provide support to the Holloway Hub, taking responsibility for the faculty not covered by the elected officer. As we move to a 3 officer model the role of President will be a portfolio position and Trustees will look to review support at Holloway Hub.

Only students at those Hubs will be eligible to stand.

**ORGANISATION**

- Each Hub has a forum / committee that is actively supported and meets regularly consisting of 7 elected officers from that Hub
- Hub forums are linked to exec and council for global and representational issues
- Hub portfolio holders are linked to representational groups i.e. LGBT, Post Grad, etc. for University wide activity and policy decisions (linked to those groups or communities)
- Each Hub has a budget for activity divided as they see fit
- Each Hub has events and activities, supported by staff and Hub workers, these events can be social, educational, etc. but should be designed to build community and belonging
- Campaigns will be decided by Hubs, with Council agreeing any cross campus or national campaigns and linking in to hubs
- A weekly management committee will meet consisting of sabs and staff to plan and coordinate activity provide support and oversee development
- Oversight remits (campaigns, media, diversity, etc) will be divided according to the interest and skills of those elected

**SUPPORT**

- Each Hub has an identified staff member who has oversight responsibility for that Hub
- Each Hub has dedicated student staff (Hub Support Workers) to facilitate and support activity. These should however not be seen as a substitute for elected student representatives they are there to facilitate those who are elected. They will help with officer support and admin
- There will be a centralised reception and infrastructure
- There will be activities, specialist staff, workshops, drops ins etc. at each hub on a regular rota basis
- Each Hub will have volunteers with training to provide peer support
- The staff and sabbatical officers are the spokes that link Hubs together to form one Union
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