

Queen's University Belfast Students' Union

Full-Time Student Officer Report

Role: Union President

Name: Beth Elder

Period Covered by Report: January 2024

Introduction

Haigh gach duine,

As President of the Students' Union, I co-ordinate the activity and campaigns of the Students' Union and act as chief spokesperson on behalf of the Union. I work to ensure the Union priorities are enacted and chair several Committees of the Students' Union, such as the Executive Management Committee and Standing Committee.

My areas of focus for the year are co-ordinating the Union Priorities (Housing, Cost of Living, Sustainability, Voter Registration/Student Manifesto, Mental Health, and Student Voice), as well as developing Student Community and Democracy, International Student Supports, and Political Lobbying.

Project Progress

Throughout January, I spent time preparing internally for national conferences (NUS, NUS-USI and USI), through engaging with the elected delegates for each conference. Through this, we wrote and submitted a motion on Solidarity to the people of Palestine to NUS conference, and a motion on Political Mobilisation and Democratisation to NUS-USI conference. As the policy file for USI was already extensive, delegates decided not to submit anything.

Additionally, the Union was internally preparing for the Students' Union Elections which included organising and speaking at events to inform potential candidates about the roles.

The entire Students' Union Executive engaged in an away day with all of University Management Board and delegations from the various Trade Union's including UCU, Unite, and Nipsa. The purpose of this was to build bridges between the University, Students' Union and Trade Unions after the fallout from the Marking Assessment Boycott.

The Officer team also spent two days in Derry for USI National Council where we discussed issues such as transgender healthcare.

I was added to the Student Partnership Model Group where we discussed final outputs for a Student Partnership Framework at Queen's and drafted a skeleton of the key areas needing to be covered. It was then decided that a student researcher post should be created to aid with this growing work.

Additionally, myself and some of the other officers spent a lot of time discussing the Welcome and Induction period that currently exists at Queen's for new students, and what is needed to reform this. We met with a staff member from ESS (Education Student Services) to discuss these concerns and what steps we may take moving forward. It was agreed that consultation with each of the schools and student representatives needed to occur before drafting a paper to take to the next Education Committee for Student Experience.

The key theme to January was Sustainability with preparations for the Student Summit and relaunching the Climate Action Group.

Negotiations for outcomes of the Decolonise, Demilitarise, and Democratise referendum continued.

Finally, I entered negotiations with staff around the household income thresholds for the accommodation bursaries which currently sit at £19,250 and £25,000, meaning that less than 50% of the ringfenced money was spent. The hope is to raise this so that the ringfenced 0.5million is used up, impacting 50% more students.

Key Events / Meetings

Date	Details of Activity (and outcomes for students)
5 th Jan	FR Leaders Programme Panel on Sustainability
10 th Jan	Executive Management Committee
11 th Jan	ESS Steering Group
11 th Jan	Catch up with Director of Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility
11 th Jan	Corporate Governance Review
12 th Jan	Meeting with NUS-USI delegates to discuss policy submission
16 th Jan	Meeting with careers around Sustainability and Employability
16 th Jan	Meeting with Vice Chancellor
16 th Jan	Meeting to discuss Welcome Week
17 th Jan	Catch-up with Pro Vice Chancellor for Education and Students
19 th Jan	Meeting regarding Holocaust Memorial Day
22 nd Jan	ESS and SU Sweep
22 nd Jan	Students' Union Council
23 rd Jan	UMB/TU/SU Away Day
24 th Jan	Election Information Event
25 th Jan – 26 th Jan	USI National Council
29 th Jan	Student Partnership Model meeting
29 th Jan	Management Board
30 th Jan	Student Summit for Sustainability
31 st Jan	First meeting of the Climate Action Group
31 st Jan	Protest against Coca-Cola CFO