

Queen's University Belfast Students' Union

Full-Time Student Officer Report

Role: Student Officer Equality and Diversity

Name: Sajid Khan

Period: August

Introduction: As Campaigns and Engagement Student Officer, my role is divided between assisting the development of Union campaign strategies and coordinating student development in Clubs and Societies, Volunteering, Enterprise and RAG. As all officers do, I represent and advocate for students in their academic life.

Activity	Description
Swap Shop/the Exchange	SO President, Operations Manager and I have been working on developing an idea for the retail space on the ground floor of the Union building. We have settled on a swap shop, in order to help tackle issues around wastage and sustainability amongst student populations. We had many meetings regarding the rules and regulations around the operations of the shop. We met with residential life staff to discuss potential opportunities in building a network amongst accommodation donation stations in order to ensure a continuous supply of stock. We envisage opening the unit in early to mid October, stock permitting. Staff have been notified that they can donate for the initial stock, and donation bins have been set up in the union building.
RAG Chair Meetings	SO President and I met with the RAG Chair a few times during the month to discuss plans for the year and provide expertise when it comes to planning Freshers Events. We worked out ways in which we could support the upcoming Y2K RAG Freshers Night.
Clubs and Societies Annual Planning	SO President and I, met with the Clubs and Societies department to discuss plans for the upcoming year. We identified a number of key areas for development: finance regulation review, high risk sporting activity procedures, intervarsity's, accessible sport offering, promotion and representation.
Hosted Limerick Student Life	On our journey back from SUTs, SO President, SO Education and NUS-USI President and I decided to pop into Limerick Student Life – who are not members of USI. They gave us a tour of their campus and facilities and they are in the process of developing a new building that is designed after our SU. We invited them up to Belfast and introduced them to our services and gave them an overview of our governance and they did the

	<p>same for us. A great networking opportunity with a comparator union.</p>
Riots Response	<p>I attended the initial counter protest to the far right Islamophobic protest, which quickly descended into rioting and destruction. During the week after the SU formulated on how we would respond. We liaised with the University and Trade Unions, with the initial plans being to keep the SU open as a safe refuge on the Friday and Saturday (expected days of further protest), though the University – taking police advice decided to shut down the campus. We got messaging out around the available supports and personal safety alarms that could be retrieved from reception. After making a statement condemning the racist attacks, we attended the subsequent counter protests that were planned, though we decided not to make a call to action for students as we felt this could pose a significant safety risk for our international and Muslim students. Throughout this whole ordeal, we continued to pressure the university to make sure they were providing clarity on what services would be available and when, in order to avoid reactive decision making that prevent students from being able to plan their routes properly and safely.</p> <p>Also, as far as I'm concerned, the rioters were all terrorists and should be charged as such.</p>
NI HE Funding	<p>We received notice from NUS-USI that the Department for the Economy is planning a Higher Education Funding Review – with assurances that tuition fees will not be within in the scope of the review. Regardless of this we will be planning to issue a report/review/modelling of our own on the state of HE funding with recommendations for the DfE to consider. This is currently projected to be developed for January, in order to get ahead of RoI elections which may impact the commitments we might be able to procure.</p>
Activism Training	<p>SU Voice and I have been developing a programme for activism training to be delivered either mid way through the first semester or late second semester. The intention is to have this Future Ready certified so we are working on developing a workbook, workshops and ways for participants to evidence work.</p>
Commercial Services Forum	<p>This is the forum in which SOs can engage with the commercial services within the Union. We receive financial, pricing and footfall updates, as well as consult on any significant changes to practice. We received positive news around the removal of the Starbucks Fridge and were notified that a replacement product was being sourced. The Bar notified us of increases in prices, we had anticipated this coming as we had agreed a freeze in prices in the previous year. We insisted these needed</p>

	<p>to be presented clearly and timely with a visible menu, this will be followed up on the next meeting. Discussions have been ongoing regarding the use, cost and availability of the Mandela for students. The Wee bar will be opening up during the day as café so that the space can be better utilised in the morning hours. The Bars and Ents team have also been planning the Household festival during the Freshers period, which they gave us updates on.</p>
SUT+/ RGSU	<p>All SOs attended SUT+, hosted by USI and held in Ulster's Coleraine campus. I attended the workshops during the day, though admittedly these weren't overly useful for me, as they are intended for 1st year officers. Great campus and nice to network nonetheless. SO President and I had to leave SUT+ to attend the Russel Group Students' Union in Durham. It was a good experience to meet with comparable SUs and to discuss how to better utilise our bargaining power. Over the course of the 2 days the SO President and I argued our case that the priorities of the Russel Group should be focused on ethical investments of their universities, Widening Participation sector research. Through consensus decision making, this was agreed to be the priorities for the group this year.</p>
Widening Participation Meeting	<p>I met with staff from the WPU to discuss possible ways the SU can work in tandem with them to support and assist students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Establishing these connections early, will hopefully assist in the long run when it comes to developing more concrete plans.</p>