

Date: Thursday, 08 November 2018

Item: Sabbatical Report

Union Senate



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*The details in this report reflect progress made since the last meeting of Union Senate, which took place on Thursday 17 May 2018 (#3 of 201718 AY).*

*Minutes of previous meetings can be found on our website here:*

*<https://www.susu.org/representation/minutes/committees/1745>*

### Leading the Union

**Goal 1: Improving Union representation**

This goal overlaps neatly with Goal #2 of this section as well, so I will focus on the changes to Undergraduate (UG) students in this section. The good news is that the new UG Academic Rep structure is now live, and accurately reflects the shape of the University following the changes made over the summer months. I will add a copy of the new structure below for reference (1), but this four-level system means that we can offer far more tailored representation than we could under the previous three-level system. We were also able to reduce the workload that our (previously 8, now 5) Faculty Officers are exposed to, ensuring that they are able to balance their volunteering commitments with their degree work.

Course Rep recruitment has been positive this year, with 259 Course Reps being invited along to training. Training uptake is currently at 62% across the whole of the institution which is reassuring (see photo 2), and we are in the process of converting our training to an online Learning Management System (LMS) course to allow those who could not attend to remain up-to-date. All trained Course Reps have a SUSU-branded Course Rep t-shirt, which for the first time offers them a discount at certain SUSU outlets (10% in the Shop & Shop on Top).

Co-option remains a useful tool for bolstering numbers, with some large co-option cohorts due in the coming weeks.

Progress: 2

<p><b>Goal 2:</b> <i>Strengthening our Postgraduate representation</i></p>	<p>We know that Postgraduate (PG – R for Research and T for Taught) representation – especially in the academic sense – is something that we have not done particularly well in recent years. I am keen to see this start to change this year, and as such set out to elect our first PGR Reps to provide Faculty-level PGR representation. We filled 3 of the 5 roles, and our Reps are already hard at work improving the PGR experience in their Faculties. We have also stepped up our SUSU efforts with the Doctoral College, ensuring that we have a presence at as many events as possible. This includes the Doctoral College Welcome event that I attended alongside SUSU core staff to promote our offer and services.</p> <p>The next step, naturally, is to expand this to cover PGT students at the same level, before then beginning to look at “Course” (or equivalent) representation. This is a goal which is going to go after June 2019, but it is my hope to have the key policy work completed during the course of the 2018/19 Academic Year (AY).</p>
<p>Progress: 2</p>	
<p><b>Goal 3:</b> <i>Encouraging a culture of consultation at the University of Southampton</i></p>	<p>The ideal of “SUSU Faculty Forums” has very much been waiting for the new Executive Director (Student Experience) to arrive at the University. However, I am pleased to say that the institution-wide Student Forums are set to continue into the future, with the first coming up at the end of November. I am continuing to advocate for a second Student Forum during Semester 2, preferably taking place <i>before</i> the Easter vacation period.</p>
<p>Progress: 1</p>	
<p><b>Additional Comments:</b> This section may seem very Union-centric, but I firmly believe that this is work that needs to be done. The demands of NSS Question 26 mean that proactive Academic Representation <u>has</u> to be a priority for the Students’ Union, and this groundwork should leave us in very good stead for the years to come.</p>	

## How the Students’ Union looks after your academic interests.

The Students’ Union’s Academic Representatives are here to represent all Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students and pass on any concerns and suggestions. They are trained and supported by the Students’ Union.

Find out more at [www.susu.org/education](http://www.susu.org/education)

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↕ Feedback to

Faculty Officer

↕ Feedback to

School Presidents

↕ Feedback to

Department Presidents

↕ Feedback to

Course Reps

↕ Feedback to

Student Body (Me)

Representation

1 - The new UG Academic Rep structure



2 - A group of Course Reps following their training

New Ideas	
<p><b>Goal 1:</b> <i>Improving the availability and design of study spaces within the Students' Union</i></p>	<p>The Representation Team have conducted an initial review into what spaces we have available at the Students' Union, and have agreed that one side of the Café (and the external entrance) is our preferred option for some renovation. We have already been making some improvements to this area (including the introduction of another phone-specific) charging locker (3), but any further works rely on funding being made available. The good news is that the University is keen to continue driving forward the Masterplan, and therefore we may see some investment in the near future. If anyone has any ideas for (cheap!) things that we could do to improve the Café space, please let me know and I will see what I can do.</p> <p>Also worth mentioning that there is still work going on concerning University spaces. The Library recently introduced two microwaves (Hartley Library, L2) and work continues on the Centenary Student Learning Centre (CSLC) with a completion date of Spring 2019. A number of the Sabbatical Officers met with members of the steering group for CSLC to discuss operational matters (e.g. opening hours), and a dialogue remains open and productive on this matter.</p>
<p>Progress: 1</p>	
<p><b>Goal 2:</b> <i>Expanding the University's digital resources to improve access to information</i></p>	<p>Progress on this goal has been slow going, but the recent re-launch of the University's NSS Quick Wins group has helped insofar that the UoS Maps service (maps.soton.ac.uk) is back under the spotlight. Our current plans are to ensure that details about SUSU catering outlets are updated live on the map, as well as constructing a data layer for "Student Amenities" (e.g. Microwaves, Hot Water, Chill-out spaces etc).</p> <p>No progress on the software and MySouthampton points at present, but I reckon they will be picked up by the same NSS group before long.</p>
<p>Progress: 1</p>	
<p><b>Goal 3:</b> <i>Unpacking printing costs, and</i></p>	<p>Pretty much all of my Senate reports for 2017/18 made mention of printing in one way or another, and as such I am thrilled to confirm that UoS now has a</p>

creating a system which is fair for all

fleet of brand new printers and a pricing structure to match (4). This has been the culmination of many months' worth of effort by SUSU Reps, iSolutions and other stakeholders and I would like to extend my thanks to them for their engagement and support. Many of the features that support this new service are still being phased in (Mobile Printing was released just a few weeks ago), and dissertation binding costs are being reviewed alongside this.

Due to a breakdown in communication between an external company and the Students' Union a "free" printing service is looking unlikely. However we are intending to offer all Student Leaders free printing (of items relevant to their role) through the Union's own printing contract.

Progress: 2

**Additional Comments:** A mixed bag in this section in terms of progress, but some very good stories to shout about. I am particularly pleased with the new charging locker and the reduction in printing charging, since these two items should have a very tangible impact on the experience of students here at the University of Southampton.



3 - The new charging locker, located in the Cafe (B42, L3)

## Reduced printing costs for all students

Thanks to the hard work of the Students' Unions Academic Reps, WSA Committee and volunteers we have been able to successfully reduce the cost of printing for all students.

Paper size	Type	Duplex (sides)	Current	New	Saving
A4	B/W	Single	£0.05	£0.04	20%
A4	B/W	Double	£0.09	£0.07	22%
A4	Colour	Single	£0.25	£0.18	28%
A4	Colour	Double	£0.48	£0.35	27%
A3	B/W	Single	£0.10	£0.08	20%
A3	B/W	Double	£0.19	£0.14	26%
A3	Colour	Single	£0.50	£0.35	30%
A3	Colour	Double	£0.96	£0.50	48%

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4 - The new cost-to-print for UoS students

## Building on the Union's Work

**Goal 1:** *Create an Education Zone driven by student issues*

The first Education Zone of the year has taken place, albeit more as a catch-up and introduction session than anything else. We have been successful in our Ordinary Member recruitment, however, and have been able to appoint representatives to Union Senate (1x) and University Senate (3x). Our second meeting is due to take place before the Christmas vacation period, but the Zone has already agreed on two goals for the year ahead – **Study Spaces** and **Feedback Systems**. These are intended to be common areas of work across the whole institution, and I will therefore be expecting Faculty Officers to update on their progress on these at the next meeting.

No You Make Change submissions have had particular relevance to the work of the Zone, but needless to say this may change as the year goes on.

Progress: 1

**Goal 2:** *Celebrating our Academic reps*

The first Academic Rep Social event took place on 06/11/2018, with upwards of 70 Academic Reps attending (5). Feedback from the event was incredibly good, and as such planning is already well underway for the second event of the year.

We're also looking to revitalise Course Rep Training this year, dividing the training sessions up to cover a longer period of time. November sees Course Reps offered Look After Your Mate and Communications & Public Speaking training free of charge, with signups looking positive at the time of writing.

The Course Rep Handbook is now complete, and is being distributed to Course Reps as part of the post-training materials.

Progress: 2

**Goal 3:** *Promoting the work of our Clubs & Societies*

Minimal progress thus far, although I have had some promising conversations with the Zone's Clubs & Societies Rep. This looks like it could be a busy round of Affiliations for us, and that may well be the impetus for us to start work here properly.

No conversations about Intramural as of yet, although they appear to be enjoying the new kit the Zone purchased for them last year!

Progress: 0

**Additional Comments:** The success of the first Academic Rep social is incredibly reassuring, and it is my hope that this trend continues as the year goes on. The success of the new training model very much depends on how well it is attended, but as mentioned above signups look positive at present. Lots of work still to be done here as the year goes on!



5 - A photo from the Academic Rep Welcome event

## Developing the role

**Additional Comments:** *Due to recent events, the Sabbatical Team has been unable to meet and agree upon a set of common goals for the “Developing the Role” section. However, some areas of focus have already started to appear naturally (including the Union Review) and it is therefore our intention to have a full set of goals complete for scrutiny by the second meeting of Union Senate.*

## Conclusion/AOB

The first few months of the Academic Year are busy for any Sabbatical Officer, and this does not get any easier being a returning Sabbatical Officer. However I am pleased with the progress that I have been able to make thus far, and I hope that Senate feels reassured that the Union is moving in the right direction from an education policy and academic representation perspective.

The Education Zone usually has a bit of a distant relationship with Freshers’ (most of our activity takes place in the months following it), but our attendance at various Union events went incredibly well and did help to drive interest in our elected positions. I also joined a number of staff members in the Representation Team to help organise Big Night In, which saw hundreds of students engage with a number of our clubs and societies in a very *chill* break from the buzz of Freshers’ Week.

One item of AOB that I did want to raise is my recent involvement with Unilink and the University’s Transport Team in improving the bus service for University students. A new fleet has recently launched across both Unilink and Bluestar, and channels of communication remain open to ensure a good dialogue between SUSU and all other parties.

As ever I’d like to thank the SUSU Representation staff and the volunteers who make up the Education Zone for their support, input and guidance. They are a fantastic team to work alongside, and I honestly wouldn’t be able to do this role without them.

As always, I am more than happy to meet to discuss my plans, ideas and things that I could be incorporating into them. My details are at the top of this form if you are so inclined!

	What is the idea?	What do you hope to achieve?	Who will you be working with?	When do you expect to be finished (term)?
Leading the Union	Improving Union representation	A new representation structure which provides comprehensive representation to all students	SUSU Representation staff, SUSU SLT, University leadership, Wellington WG	June 2019 (with the new Course Rep structure to go live in Autumn 2018)
	Strengthening our Postgraduate representation	A dedicated Postgraduate representation structure tailored to their needs <b>INCLUDING</b> Course Rep coverage for PGRs and PGTs (or equivalent)	SUSU Representation staff, SUSU PG Committee, University Doctoral College	June 2019 (with the first PGR structure to go live in Autumn 2018)
	Encouraging a culture of consultation at the University of Southampton	The development of SUSU "Faculty Forums" into regular well-promoted events with University support	SUSU Representation staff, Academic Reps (esp. Faculty Officers) Education Strategy WG, Student Forum WG (?)	May 2019 (by which time two Forums should have taken place)
New ideas	Improving the availability and design of study spaces within the Students' Union	The redevelopment of the SUSU Café space as a properly-equipped study space.	SUSU SLT, SUSU Facilities, SUSU Representation staff	June 2019 (though maybe sooner if resource/funding allows)
	Expanding the University's digital resources to improve access to information	More software packages available on the VDI <b>AND</b> Improved MySouthampton experience <b>AND</b> Review into SUSSED integration	iSolutions, Library staff	December 2018 (dependent on iSolutions engagement)
	Unpacking printing costs, and creating a system which is fair for all	A lower cost of printing to students <b>AND</b> Possible reductions in binding costs <b>AND</b> Possible Union printing service	iSolutions, SUSU SLT	December 2018 (much sooner for core cost-of-printing strategy)
Building on the Union's work	Create an Education Zone driven by student issues	Six quorate Education Zone meetings across the year, across a range of Campuses and solving issues raised by students (e.g. YMC)	SUSU Representation staff	N/A (will be throughout the year instead)
	Celebrating our Academic reps	4 Academic Rep Celebration events, expanding on the scale and uptake of those this year <b>AND</b> A comprehensive Academic Rep training programme across a number of months <b>AND</b> A revised Course Rep Handbook	SUSU Representation staff (esp. CR Co-ordinator)	May 2019 (following 4 successful events)
	Promoting the work of our Clubs & Societies	Improved involvement of Zone Clubs & Socs in activities of the Zone <b>AND</b> A review into Club & Soc "value", especially for IM teams	SUSU Representation staff (esp. Ed Co-ordinator), Sabbatical Officers	N/A (will be throughout the year instead)