

Queen's University Belfast Students' Union

Full-Time Student Officer Report

Role: Student Officer Equality and Diversity

Name: Sajid Khan

Period: July

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
Hiring RAG Chair	Many great applicants came forward, and it was tough for the panel of myself, the previous RAG chair and the Volunteering manager to come to a decision. In the end Vidya Kalidindi was hired as she demonstrated great professionalism, enthusiasm and a strong vision for the future of RAG.
General Election	<p>Having the General Election at such a time was difficult, but we made a lot of effort to push out information on registering to Vote, particularly around the rules for international students. Relevant societies and student groups were contacted to spread awareness, and social media posts were scheduled to hit at times of high engagement. We also collaborated with NUS-USI to push messaging to all HE/FEs.</p> <p>A number of media appearances were made by the outgoing and incoming presidents (Sky News, BBC, Nolan show) all of which I assisted in the crafting of messaging. We got some key messages out regarding Votes at 16, the need for education policy in manifestos, housing issues and the importance of a Gaza ceasefire to young people. We also challenged the narrative the media was attempting to craft around historical sectarian voting lines, instead refocusing the story on students voting for issues that affect them.</p>
Outreach/ Meet and Greets	With 3 new Officers incoming, we spent a lot of the first month meeting the various departments within the Union and University. This was a useful opportunity to either develop existing relationships or create new relationships.
Parents and Carers Fund	This project was a holdover from my previous year as Equality and Diversity Officer. We had sourced £5,000 from the UCU as a thank you for support and sacrifice over the MAB period. We felt the money should be best spent as a support fund for Student Parents and Carers. The awarding panel consisted of myself, the

	<p>current Equality and Diversity Officer and members of the SU Voice and Advice teams. 34 applications received awards ranging from £175 - £100. We decided that given the number of applicants we felt demonstrated they needed the money, that we needed to stretch the funding by lower the maximum potential award from £200 to £175. In the end we went £50 over budget, and this was taken from SU budgets. Our criteria focused on fairness, access to existing supports and demonstrable need. This was a tough but rewarding experience, and although the amounts of money may not go far during a cost of living crisis, I do hope that it was able to make some people's week a little easier.</p>
SUTs	<p>This is Student Union Training, hosted by USI and ran in MTU Kerry. It is a week of training and policy development workshops, with socials in the evenings to help sabbatical officers network. It was an overall positive experience, with best practice amongst unions being shared freely. I was once again re-elected to USI campaigns strategy committee at the Comhairle Náisiúnta at the end of the week.</p>
Digitisation of Academic Appeals	<p>Following last years digitisation of the exceptional circumstances system, Queen's as continued work by creating an online platform for academic appeals, a previously very paperwork driven process. This is an overall positive step, as the existing process was very confusing, with the readability of the regulations and awareness of expectations surround the process being low. Myself and SU Advice have been working with Queen's on the prototyping; we've been ensuring that the process is fair and accessible and making sure there is confidential data separation for any content being shared with SU advice. This system, if implemented correctly, should allow for students to better liaise with SU advice when they are making applications, hopefully leading to stronger appeals that are successful. Throughout this whole process it was stressed the importance of the students right to defend themselves as thoroughly as possible whilst also balancing the practicality of processing appeals. Overall, I believe the balance was struck, with the system hopefully helping students in writing appeals with information that is relevant to the process. This system will be continually reviewed and SU will maintain a hand in the development of a fairer system.</p>
Pride	<p>Attended Belfast Pride with the Officer team, NUS-USI and UUSU</p>
Sensory Pods	<p>Assisted SO E&D with planning a project to acquire a sensory study pod for the SU.</p>