Student Officer Review

What would you like the Union to do?

Over the course of Term One, the Representation and Democracy Team have undertaken a Student Officer Review to evaluate our provision of Student Officers. We would like Union Executive to approve the changes outlined as part of this document so that they can be implemented ahead of the 2024 Leadership Race.

Why would you like to do this?

The Union currently has 17 Student Officers, which when compared to other Students' Unions, is significantly larger than all other Unions in the UK. We want to develop a system whereby our student leaders feel fully supported when representing students, forming vibrant and inclusive communities and advocating for positive changes within the Union.

Since a Democracy Review took place in 2020, our provision of Student Officers has grown organically. The support they generally receive is sporadic, inconsistent and informal. Which has resulted in Student Officers being overworked, disengaged or left vacant.

As part of the Student Officer Review, we have identified five core principles which have been used to guide this review:

- Our model should be clear and understandable to students.
- There should be equity in the workload and expectation of roles.
- Our model should aim to increase voter turnout and engagement with our democratic structures.
- Our model should be led by self-organised student communities where these exist.
- Our model needs to avoid duplication of effort and consolidate how we support student communities that achieve parity.

As a consequence, we would like our Student Officers to be better supported so that they can continue to represent students, form vibrant and inclusive communities and advocate for positive changes within the Union.

Structure

- Where applicable, adopt a Network model whereby these student groups receive tailored specialist support and they can only be removed or changed through a change to the Bye-Laws.
- The leaders of the Networks should still be called 'Student Officer' but for some Student Officer, they will be convene a Network with committee members.

- Each Network should elect a Welfare Officer and Treasurer as well as any other positions which the conveyor of the Network chooses.

Recommendations

1. Union Executive is asked to approve the portfolio of Student Officers and Associated Networks outlined below:
   - Disabled Students' Network (Already exists)
   - People of Colour Network (Already exists)
   - Women's Network (Already exists)
   - International Students Network
   - LGBTQ+ Network (Including two convenors, one of whom must self-identify as Trans*)
   - Mature, Part-Time & Carers Students' Network
   - Research Students' Network

2. Union Executive is asked to retain the current Student Officer roles. These roles will not have a Network, but the provision of 'Reps' who support the Officer will be reviewed in Term Two:
   - Arts Officer
   - Sports Officer
   - Societies Officer
   - Volunteering Officer

3. Union Executive is asked to commit to a review of the following Officer positions at a later date:
   - Accommodation and Housing Officer (Until the review of the Hall Community Officers is completed at the end of the 2023-24 academic year)
   - UCL East Students' Officer (To be reviewed in January 2025)

4. Finally, Union Executive is asked to confirm the removal of the two Student Officer roles:
   - Social Class & Mobility Officer
   - Sustainability Officer

How will this affect students?

By making these changes and reducing the number of Student Officers elected in the Leadership Race, this should increase engagement in terms of number of candidates and voters.

By committing to review the provision of staff support for Student Officers, our student leaders will be better supported when they undertake their role.