

Response to the motion to call a Vote of No Confidence in the Guild president

I'd like to discuss some of the issues that have been raised through the motion, namely my handling of External Memberships, as well as some of the many ways in which I have been advocating for and supporting the student body over my time as Guild President.

The call to remove External Memberships from the Guild of Students came from information available to the Full Time Officer Team, which highlighted serious safety concerns for students. The severity of this information necessitated an urgency to act. I spent my first and second year at UOB working towards a safer community. My manifesto echoed these commitments and I was elected on a mandate of safety. Since the initial removal of External Memberships, I have understood that students needed more explanation from the Guild. I offered meetings to all students that wanted to discuss the decision. Following on from the All Student Vote, I lobbied the Guild to re-investigate ways in which students on a Leave of Absence, amongst other groups, could be a part of the Guild community. As a result, further information came to light about how we could better support students on a Leave of Absence, carers of students, trainers/coaches and University of Birmingham staff. This was presented at the first Trustee Board meeting following the March All Student Vote, which led to the re-opening of membership for these groups - a correction which I supported whole-heartedly.

The motion also claims that 'the president actively opposes...students views' which I was devastated to hear as I have truly spent all of my time as Guild President trying to act in the best interests of students. Throughout this year I have consistently listened to students' voices and acted on feedback and ideas. To list a few: updating campus maps with gender neutral bathrooms, water taps, microwaves, kettles and baby changing rooms; implementing the motion that the 'Guild should stand for Fossil Free Careers' and was the officer lead on the democracy review to make it easier for voices to be heard.

In my manifesto, I committed to being as open and transparent as possible which can be seen through my weekly updates on social media, meeting with any student that has requested it and introducing an 'open door policy' for the Full Time Officers' Office. I have successfully lobbied for the procurement of a survivor friendly consent course, the distribution of circa 6000 free personal safety alarms and the introduction of £3 hot meals in Joe's Bar. I have continued to campaign for a more sustainable university experience with a trial of plant-based milk as standard, pushing for university divestment and for the first time secured the place for students to attend investment committees in London alongside me. It has been an enormous privilege to be your Guild President for the last 10 months and I hope that you will allow me to continue to strive for a better UOB in these final weeks. I hope that you will vote no in this motion to call for a Vote of No Confidence in me.

- Acacia