

Officer:	Mikey Brown, President
Date of panel:	January 2022

Manifesto and Action Plan Update

The Scrutiny Panel may wish to refer to the President's Officer Action Plan (attached) delivered to the trustee board in January 2022 to provide further detail on the below.

Since our last meeting In November, the following progress has been made:

- Renter's Union - this will launch on Wednesday 26th January 2022. Social media accounts have been set up; logo and brand assets created; Initial educational content for social media and website created; strategy for press engagement and external stakeholder management discussed with Comms & Marketing Manager; data and Intelligence from Guild Advice/Community Wardens obtained and analysed. The data show significant evidence that Oakmans Is the market actor that Is most problematic and the Initial campaigning work of the Renters' Union will focus on that agent - the President will recruit a small team of student volunteers to coordinate work In this area
- Lobbying against Increased rent In University accomodation - The annual residence fee review meeting was held with the University. Along with the WCO we secured a 0% Increase In rents for Maple Bank and a below Inflation Increase for Tennis Courts securing value for money for students and ensuring more affordable accommodation options remain reasonably priced and those least able to afford Increases are the least affected by Increases.
- Activist Network - We discussed the Initial success of the launch and then subsequent drop-off In engagement In the previous meeting. I have discussed this In detail with the Campaigns Officer and outgoing Campaigns and Policy Coordinator to set In train plans for a relaunch event once students return with a renewed focus on networking. We will use cross-cutting Issues such as the upcoming Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill which will bring student activists and campaigning groups together to help drive Interest and bring people together.
- Activist and Campaigning President - In November I attended a roundtable event with Preet Gill MP, venue managers and senior police officers lobbying for better police communication and greater action. I delivered a talk at UoB's "Late Night at the Exchange"

event about my visit to COP16 the UN Climate Change Conference of Youth, discussing student perspectives and the politics of carbon reduction In December, as part of Disabled History Month, I held an event "Raising Our Voices" with the DSO, WCO and attended by disabled students, showcasing the Guild's Disabled Students Commission and promoting disability activism. On Monday 17th Jan, I will be appearing on a panel with Toby Young at a Westminster Higher Education Forum conference on free speech In HE arguing against proposed regulations that would impose undue burdens on Student Unions and fail to protect students from hate speech.

- Mental Health Support - My work In this area has been focused around securing engagement In and promoting the Guild's Change In Mind priority campaign, which is currently at the listening campaign stage, aiming for 1000 conversations with UoB students about the impact of their University experience on their mental health (for good or bad). I have led campaigning activity In this area, conducting officer roadshows, contributing to training of volunteers, volunteer management, activity coordination and leading volunteers to conduct "neighbourhood walks" and holding conversations personally. We will use the data collected to formulate specific asks of the University, adopting a whole University approach to mental health, using the Student Minds Mental Health charter as a starting point.
- Covid mitigations - I continued to chair Joined Up Conversations meetings with Academic Registrar, Director of Student Affairs and other key stakeholders and liaising closely with the University to safeguard the quality and accessibility of provision. In contrast to a majority of Russell Group Universities we have been able to deliver continued remote learning for students abroad unable to return (over 900 eligible students) and successfully lobby the University to move January exams online to maintain student safety amid Omicron surge. I supported the International and Education Officers to deliver these wins, including personally "sealing the deal" with the Director of Education of MDS around online assessments.
- Financial Recovery and Merch - Both of these activities have been moved Into the work of the Commercial Operations Review Group and I am taking forward plans for Guild and Old Joe branded reusable merch to be available for sale In February 2022, with the range of merchandise identified and suppliers being scoped. The Guild has engaged external consultants, and plans floated to build a business case for a bubble tea/waffle outlet will be adapted to fit In line with that work but options including franchising or a short-term trial of the offer within Joe's Bar are options under consideration.
- Divestment and Climate Emergency Campaigning - We have created a coalition of interested campaigning groups and students and developed a set of actionable demands for the University to take forward including a commitment to complete divestment from fossil fuel holdings by the end of the academic year, and declaration of a climate emergency and adjustment of the University's net zero Initiative. I have researched the University's current holdings and the workings of the University Investment Subcommittee. My personal relationship with the New Vice Chancellor and my position on SPRC and University Council along with targeted student-led will be used to apply pressure to the University In this area.

Updates on Other Areas of Work

- As the Officer responsible for democracy, I delivered a free & fair and quorate referendum on the Guild's stance on UCU Industrial action. Anecdotally, other Russell Group Unions found it difficult to engage students on the issue, so other 2000 voters should be seen as a success. Following the result, I authored a well-received public statement from the Officer Group and attended picket line rallies during the strike action. As part of my involvement with the Aldwych Group of Russell Group SU Presidents, we will be lobbying University UK and UCEA to return to negotiations in order to obviate the need for further industrial action. I maintain in close communication with the University around the mitigation on the impact on students.
- As part of Appointments Panel, I approved the appointment of Yinbo Yu, a former NUS International Officer and current Director of External Partnerships at UKCISA to the trustee board.
- As Chair of Finance Committee, I approved additional funding for anti-spiking security measures in the Guild's venue to be continued and approved additional spending on body worn cameras for Guild security staff.
- I continue to sit on the University's steering groups for the Forum for Global Challenges and Commonwealth Games and have ensured the direction and planning for those events engages students and is reflective of their needs. I have identified LGBTQ+ inclusion (across participants, spectators and staffing) of the Games to be a key priority and will be meeting with the University in the near future to move this forward and secure commitments.
- At the recent Trustee Board Away Day, I secured a commitment from the Interim Pro-Vice Chancellor of Education for a joint working group on the Guild's Disabled Students' Commission and a summit of Officers and the University's Education Senior Leadership Team to discuss student priorities for Semester Two.