

Student Vice-President AGM report 2018/19

Within my remit at QMUSU this year, there have been a variety of developments made aiming to improve the smooth running of sports teams and societies and to enhance the overall student experience. From increasing our club engagement levels to developing a step by step plan for S&S committee training, development and support, this has been one of QMUSU's most successful years for sports and societies, see my key achievements listed below:

Give It a Go week

In September 2018, we were granted funding from the WISer board to put on a week-long programme of events aimed at encouraging students to get involved with sports, societies and extracurricular activities at QMU, while breaking down some of the existing barriers that often prevent students from engaging with available activities.

The initiative consisted of almost 40 free events across an entire week that were open to all students, no matter their ability, experience or financial situation. From football to stand-up comedy and from guided bike rides to cheerleading, the initiative consisted of almost 40 free events that were wide in variety and ran from morning to night – so there was something for everyone to get involved with.

Scottish Disability Sport also featured throughout the week, holding a Boccia session and having a stall in the main university building to inform students with disabilities about what sporting opportunities were available in the wider community, and Disability Snow Sports UK (DSUK) came along to our snow sports session and brought along some adaptive equipment so everyone could Give It a Go!

Over 450 students took part in the project, a great level of engagement from both new and returning students at QMU, and while the majority consisted of first year students as expected, it also showed strong engagement from our Direct Entrants and International students.

We are already seeing early evidence of the impact that the Give It a Go project has had. This includes the dramatic growth level of membership in our sports teams and societies for the 2018/19 academic year, with some clubs seeing their numbers doubling in size. We hope that this will impact the overall level of enjoyment that our students experienced during their first few weeks at QMU, and that their overall time at university is enhanced as a result of having the opportunity to take part in these activities, try new things, and establish a wider group of friends outside of their own classes and year groups.

Our Production Society also filmed a selection of activities throughout the week and made a video which can be found here:

<https://www.facebook.com/qmuproductionsociety/videos/2199662053640007/>

Disability Inclusion

One of my main goals this year was to incorporate disability inclusion into more of the things that we do at QMUSU. This was achieved by making our fresher's events as accessible as possible, for example by rerouting our pub march so all venues had wheelchair access. We have also built partnerships with

Scottish Disability Sport who held events during Give It a Go week and our snow sports team have worked closely with Disability Snow Sports UK.

On the 22nd of March Scottish Disability Sport will be back on campus leading 24 of our S&S members through UK Disability Inclusion Training so they are able to recognise barriers and adapt to be accessible to all students at QMU.

Our clubs this year have also been on the ball with fundraising for charities that are close to their members hearts, meaning collectively we've raised money for charities such as MND Scotland, Lyme disease UK, crones & colitis UK and Anthony Nolan just to name a few.

Club training, development & support

Throughout this year changes have also been made to adapt to the ever growing responsibility placed on club committee captains while they are also experiencing the pressures of studies and work. A training and development plan was established at the beginning of this year consisting of four meeting points spread across each semester:

- Club committee training
- Semester one development planning
- Semester two development planning
- Handover training

In semester one we held out annual club committee training in a slightly different way than usual and incorporated more practical and group learning mini sessions to open up discussions and network with fellow committee members. Mini sessions included ice-breakers and 'draw the perfect committee member' which came up with some positive (and some very interesting) results. While at training all clubs were asked to fill in a development plan for the year detailing one three month goal, one six month goal and one end of year goal. In the individual semester one meetings we went through these plans more in depth and planned each clubs year thoroughly to ensure goals were met. In the individual semester two meetings we went through the development goals again in a reflective way to see which ones had been achieved and if they hadn't how we could adapt next year to make sure we reach them. The goal planning exercises have been taken up very well by the clubs at QMUSU and we've seen a very positive step in the right direction towards a more structured committee experience. These development meetings have also allowed for a more planned schedule to receive feedback from clubs and to highlight and provide support where it is needed most.

Handovers are something that have been encouraged within committees over the past few years but the process has lacked structure. This year, two documents have been created to make the handover process as simple and informative as possible, meaning outgoing committee members don't have to worry about writing up big documents and incoming committee members still get the support and guidance that they need. The first form is the 'QMUSU Club Continuation Pack' which contains important information from the incoming committee to the Students' Union, information such as contact details and funding application forms; the second form is the 'QMUSU Handover Guide' which contains sections in a 'fill in the blank' style and incorporates segments including current kit inventory, important contacts and 'outgoing to incoming' guides. In the final training of the year, club committees will be invited along to do this as a group with support from the union.

Club Successes

QMU has had an unreal year for success across all of our sports teams and societies. This year we saw a dramatic increase in the number of students getting involved in clubs with some clubs such as women's rugby doubling in size. We had more students than ever competing in representative sport and getting international recognition with one even going so far as to represent us in curling at the World University Games in Russia.

One of our biggest success stories this year has to be our Men's Basketball 1st team who won their 1A division undefeated, qualifying them for playoffs into the premier league, something no QMU team has ever done before. They have also made it to the final of the Trophy which will be played in Nottingham against Worcester on the 27th of March.

Our men's rugby team also had an undefeated season meaning they won their league and will be promoted to 3A next year. This year also saw one of our newer rugby players, Martin Cimprich, play for Scotland in the SSS team at nationals.

This year we had quite a few strong starting teams but none more than Men's Gaelic Football who joined BUCS this year for the first time and went straight into division one. They narrowly missed out on winning their league, coming second to RGU, but made it to the semi-finals of the British Championships in April, an unreal first season for the boys!

Our Netball club have also had an incredible season with the 1sts winning their league and making it to conference cup finals again! Their seconds also joined BUCS this year for the first time and it's been great to see the development of both teams. Two of the girls also played for the SSS national team this year – helping get QMU sport on the map!

Our societies have also worked tirelessly this year in their own respective fields. Through fundraising, events and socials our societies have been very busy and just like sport many have increased their membership dramatically. Our Musical Theatre society is preparing to put on their annual show and have been fundraising tirelessly to meet their target. The society's growth rate this year has been astronomical making them one of the biggest clubs on campus. Our LGBT+ society and African Caribbean Society have campaigned throughout LGBT History Month and Black History Month to raise awareness on campus. Our cheerleading squad competed at three competitions this year, the most they've ever entered, and organised their own annual Sapphire's Showcase which hosted university cheerleading and dance teams from across the country, including our own QMU Dance Society. Dance have also been very active competitors this year, entering competitions all over the UK and fundraising extensively to make sure this could happen.

Finally I would like to add a special note regarding the work our QMU podiatry Society has been doing this year. Unfortunately the Podiatry department at QMU recently lost a lecturer to prostate cancer and so the committee of the club have arranged various fundraisers and awareness events throughout this academic year. The group are currently creating a film to raise awareness of the disease and at the end of this semester will host a lecturer's vs student's charity football match to raise money for the charity.

I'd like to add a personal note to all of our students who have engaged with sports and societies this year, whether you just came to one Give It a Go event or are a standing committee member. The majority of my role revolves around student engagement in extracurricular activities and I have had the most fun this year thanks to all of you. We have had an incredibly successful year at QMU and it's all down to the effort you all put in to your clubs to make them what they are.

Other key achievements this year include:

- Securing sponsorship from Caledonian Heritable (WhyNot)
- Re-signing a partnership agreement with Rhino Teamwear for club kit
- The addition of Presidents & Captains forum in place of S&S Committee
- Allowed and supported teams to secure individual sponsorship deals
- Re-entering the Healthy Body Healthy Mind award
- Relocating Grand Ball to the Edinburgh Corn Exchange to accommodate our growing S&S community
- Making Varsity bigger and better than ever before with the addition of two venues