

# **REVIEW OF QMUSU GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES**

## **Background**

The QMUSU democratic structure has gone largely unchanged for the last 10 years. Also, the Constitution which hosts the structure is outdated and not fit for purpose. At present the constitution is 112 pages long and any change to any of the 112 pages must be approved at an AGM or EGM which is inefficient, inflexible and unnecessary.

The QMUSU Trustee Board commissioned a consultant, Nick Smith, to carry out a full Governance Review and update of the Constitution. Nick has undertaken the first part of this process which included two days of interviews with stakeholders. He provided a report and recommendations which have been fully discussed by the student officers, the SU staff team and the Trustee Board.

## **Next Steps**

This paper provides an outline of the changes that the SU wishes to make to its current structures. These are principles rather than detailed plans which ensures that we allow sufficient time to get this right with processes and language which are as student friendly as possible.

You are asked to approve the recommendations below and provide any feedback on the discussions around language for some of the recommendations.

Your suggestions will be used to create a new set of documents that will be come back to the student body for approval in Summer.

## **Timescale**

If accepted, the process of drafting new structures begins immediately. For example, the 2021/22 academic year would see the reduction of forums to 2 and in Spring 2022 the new Co-President and Part Time Officer roles would be elected to start from September.

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The following are the recommendations that we'd like students to approve:

**RECOMMENDATION 1: The SU will categorise its work into two simple areas – *Academic Life & Student Activities*.**

The first is related to the academic experience, student support and campaigns. The second is related student activities, including events and sports and societies.

*Language: Do we have any better suggestions than Academic Life and Student Activities*  
*Suggestion: Student Community*

**RECOMMENDATION 2: The Sabbatical Officer structure will move from a hierarchical structure to a flat structure.**

This means replacing the President and Vice-President structure with a Co-President model which has a President of *Academic Life* and a President of *Student Activities*. This mirrors how things work in practice at the moment.

President of *Academic Life* would cover academic experience, student support & campaigns. President of *Student Activities* would cover student activities, including events and sports and societies. They would have responsibility for representation and facilitating campaigns and projects within these areas. The need for collaborative working between both Presidents and the recognition of shared issues will be formalised.

**RECOMMENDATION 3: To reduce from four Student Representative Forums down to two forums**

Forums are likely to be *Academic Council & Campus Life Forum*. Both Presidents would be expected to attend both meetings with the President Student Activities chairing Academic Council and the President Academic Life chairing Campus Life Forum. Forums would have agenda items from Officers and students.

This reduces the time spent organising meetings for Officers and increases the time spent making changes for students.

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### **Recommendation 4: To reduce the number of Part Time Officers (PTO's) from eight to six.**

Exact roles are to be finalised but they will all have a specific and clear remit (e.g. events) and will be split between the two areas of SU work.

### **RECOMMENDATION 5: The *Officers Committee (name tbc)* will be made up of the two Presidents and six Part Time Officers.**

They will plan for a shared set of goals each year ensuring that the SU is focused on a smaller number of projects and goals to have maximum impact for students.

*Language: Executive Committee, Officers' Committee, Student Officer Committee, Student Representative Committee*

### **RECOMMENDATION 6: Annual Student Meetings and All Student Meetings**

There will be a provision for an Annual Student Meeting as well as the calling of All Student Meetings if a certain number of students (approximately 3%) wish to raise an issue.

### **RECOMMENDATION 7: Referenda**

The provision for a referenda will be retained with a quorum of 3% of students able to call it on an issue – including accountability of elected representatives.

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**RECOMMENDATION 8:** The following will be part of the simplification process of the QMUSU governing documents and byelaws:

- The purpose of the rules are clearly explained at the start of each section
- Procedures that a member of the public may wish to know (e.g. charitable objects) will be separated from those that are focused on students (e.g. Sports membership rates)
- A separation of democratic and non-democratic elements (for example legal issues that students cannot change)
- A simplification of language wherever possible
- The resolution of disputes will be clear and specific within each section rather than try and have a comprehensive rulebook that can deal with every situation.

### **For Noting:**

As well as the Trustee Board of QMUSU's approval, the University will want to have a view on the proposals as a result of their requirements under the 1994 Education Act:

“The governing body of every establishment to which this Part applies shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that any students' union for students at the establishment operates in a fair and democratic manner...”